

2-2004

The Development of *An Artist's Paradise: Minnesota Landscapes: 1840-1940*

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA

LANDSCAPES: 1840-1940

by

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B.A., University of Minnesota, 1974
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A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

St. Cloud, Minnesota

February, 2004

This thesis submitted by William J. Wittenbreer in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA
LANDSCAPES 1840-1940

William J. Wittenbreer

An Artist's Paradise: Minnesota Landscapes 1840-1940 was an exhibit that opened on January 25 and ran through June 22, 2003 at the Minnesota Museum of American Art in St. Paul, Minnesota. The exhibition featured oil paintings and works on paper of the Minnesota landscape by Minnesota artists. This thesis is a recap of the process of putting together the exhibition, the educational activities held during the exhibition, as well as the intellectual basis for the exhibition from the perspective of the co-curator.

The first chapter is a narrative that describes the co-curator's role in the location, selection and negotiations to obtain the necessary works of art for the exhibitions as well as the installation of the exhibit. It also describes the role of co-curator in the training of the museum docents and his participation in a curator's panel.

The second chapter is a discussion of the intellectual basis for the exhibition. The argument presented in the exhibition was that the early traveling artists, who first presented images of Minnesota's landscape to the rest of the country with their initial views of Minnesota, established a paradigm that later artists, with stronger ties to the state would cultivate. The model that these artists established was a belief in the potential of the land. The exhibit also examines the impact of impressionism and the impact of the variety of styles that constituted European Modernism on the artist's interpretation of the Minnesota landscape. No distinct "Minnesota style" emerges, but the exhibition provides a link to the artistic heritage of the nation with a Minnesota perspective.

The remainder of the thesis consists of brief biographical sketches of each artist whose work was in the exhibit, as well as text panels and label texts, and illustrations of the works. .

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The opportunity to co-curate an exhibition on Minnesota Landscape painters was a very rewarding experience on two levels. The first, and perhaps most important, was that as a collector of landscapes by Minnesota artists, this was indeed a collector's dream come true. Secondly, putting together the exhibition based on images introduced me to the unique and powerful language of the image as historical record. I would like to thank Lin: Nelson-Mayson, former curator of the Minnesota Museum of American Art, for asking me to co-curate the exhibition with her. Dr. Anita Gonzalez, Curator of the Minnesota Museum, provided an immense amount of moral support to me while I was working on this document, for which I am very grateful.

I would like to thank Dr. Don Hofsommer for allowing *me* to write this "unconventional thesis," as well as Dr. William Morgan, also of St. Cloud State University, who generously gave of his time to read and comment on early drafts of this document, as well his encouragements "to keep writing."

Dixie Ohlander of the Augsburg College Library's Inter-Library Loan Department deserves a great deal of thanks. The high level of professionalism, maintained by Ms. Ohlander and her staff, matched by an uncanny ability to locate and retrieve obscure documents, Ms. Ohlander and her staff, Stefenie Noggle, Kevina

Nakiwala and Libby Merrill, made much of this research possible. Ms. Ohlander also gave generously of her time to proof-read and edit this document.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my sister, Mary Wittenbreer

W. J. W.

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Chapter 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF *AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA LANDSCAPES: 1840-1940*

Background

The development of *An Artist's Paradise* began with my volunteer work at the Minnesota Museum of American Art (MMAA) and from the fact that I am a collector of Minnesota landscape paintings. The MMAA is located in the Landmark Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. The museum collects American art from the nineteenth century to the present, with a special emphasis on Minnesota art. Initially, I worked in the library of the MMAA one afternoon a week. Several of the museum's docents convinced me to become a docent, which I did. Throughout my library work and docent training, my interest in Minnesota became apparent to the staff of the MMAA and I was often consulted on various matters pertaining to Minnesota art. Lin Nelson-Mayson, Curator of the MMAA, asked me to accompany her on several visits to examine potential additions to the MMAA's collection.

In the fall of 2001, I began to discuss with Nelson-Mayson the possibility of doing an internship at the MMAA as part of my Public History program at St. Cloud State University. Lin suggested that I do an analysis of the MMAA's registrar's files to determine the extent of the museum's collection of Minnesota art. In the 1980s the

MMAA adopted a focus on American art of the first half of the century, with a special emphasis on Minnesota art. This area of concentration was identified as an area of growth for the MMAA in July, 2000.¹ This analysis, Nelson-Mayson felt, would be beneficial to the MMAA because it would determine exactly what the museum held in the area of Minnesota art.

After discussing this idea with Dr. Lee Simpson at St. Cloud State University, she suggested that I formally propose this idea to Dr. Don Hofsommer.

Dr. Hofsommer signed off on the internship. We agreed that because of the magnitude of the task that it should be a nine-credit internship, running from January, 2002 through the following June.

Internship

In order to determine what was meant by a Minnesota artist, a working definition was necessary. The definition that was adopted is as follows: "an artist, at some point in their career, had to have spent time in Minnesota and or called Minnesota 'home.'"The definition seemed sufficiently expansive enough to include artists who moved to the state for a portion of their career; such as a visiting professor in an art department or in a residency program, or someone who began or finished their career in the state. This definition did not include someone who simply depicted a Minnesota event, scene, or person.

Using this definition, I began going through the registrar's file and recording the following information on each artist:

- 1) Artist's name
- 2) Life dates (including place of birth and death)
- 3) When and where the artist lived in Minnesota
- 4) The number of works owned by the MMAA by the artist
- 5) Creation dates and titles of the works held
- 6) The existence of any biographical material in the folders pertaining to the artist.

This was not a simple copy exercise. The registrar's files were often incomplete or inconsistent. If a question arose as to the artist's status, additional research was required. Reference materials such as Peter Hastings Falk's Who was Who in American Art 1564-1975: 400 years of Artists in America, Rena Neuman Coen's Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota 1820-1914, Kay Spangler's Survey of Serial Fine Art Exhibitions and Artists in Minnesota 1900-1970 were very helpful in gaining additional information. Local art dealers were also consulted. Over two hundred artists in the MMAA's collection were identified as Minnesota artists using this process. This list will enable the MMAA to further analyze and determine gaps and strengths in their collection of Minnesota artists.

During the course of the internship, Lin Nelson-Mayson and I began having a discussion concerning the possibility of an exhibition on Minnesota artists using the MMAA's collection as the base for the exhibition. Both of us had heard of an exhibition that the Virginia Historical Society had mounted using Virginia artists. This show told the story of Virginia through the eyes of its landscape painters as well

as the artistic development of Virginia's landscape painters.² We resonated with the concepts behind this show and felt that it could serve as a model for a show at the MMAA. Nelson-Mayson asked me if I would be interested in working with her on such a show and I responded that I would. However, I said that I would like to check with the History Department at St. Cloud State to see if I could get credit for such a project and possibly use the work as a thesis topic. I contacted Dr. Hofsommer and he agreed that this was an appropriate project and suggested that I should consider taking a three credit independent study course for preliminary work for the exhibition. He also felt that I could do a process paper on the development of the show for my thesis.

Development of *An Artist's Paradise*

The first thing I did before I started the research for the show was to develop a working hypothesis. I returned to the list of Minnesota artists I had prepared during my internship to look for patterns or themes such as artistic styles or other influences that might be present, in order to develop a hypothesis for the show. I decided on the following: the exhibition would explore the development of Minnesota's artistic heritage with a focus on landscapes and changes to the land over a hundred years. Paintings and works on paper would be used in the exhibition to explore the artistic representations of the state from the early traveling artists who presented the country with the initial views of Minnesota, to the images cultivated later by artists with stronger ties to the state. Hopefully, the show would reveal how changing artistic styles were used by artists to interpret the growth and development of Minnesota's natural and built environment over the years.

To this goal, I tentatively decided to limit the show to a period of time ranging from 1840 to 1940. Artists began to come to Minnesota as early as the 1820s, but by the 1840's, Minnesota was attracting a growing number of artists, for whom Minnesota was an important stop in the course of their western travels.³ After 1940, the art world as a whole began to move rapidly away from images towards abstraction, and I felt that this simply added a much broader dimension to the exhibition, and the initial focus would be lost.

Initially, I broke the 1840-1940 timeframe into four component parts: 1840-1865, 1865-1890, 1890-1920 and 1920-1940. For each period, I wrote a brief scenario for each segment and added a list of artists that I felt were appropriate for each segment. This is a sample from one of the scenarios:

The beginning of the twentieth century was a turning point in Minnesota's artistic development. ... The art world in Minnesota was in a position to reap the benefits of the late nineteenth century. Minneapolis and St. Paul both had strong and expanding art schools, as did New Uhn and St. Cloud. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts had a brand new building and private art galleries, such as the Beard Gallery and John S. Bradstreet's Craft House, had been established... selections from the 1913 Armory Show had been on view in the Minneapolis Public Library. Minnesota was part of the national art scene.

Lin Nelson-Mayson suggested that while I was doing this analysis, I should keep my eyes open for any sub-themes that surfaced, such as the repeated depiction of a particular place or natural feature.

When I finished this analysis, Nelson-Mayson and I discussed it. Nelson-Mayson felt that there was quite a bit of overlap in my four time periods. She suggested that we use the following time divisions instead: 1840-1890, 1890-1920, and 1920-1940. She asked me if I had discovered any separate themes or stories that we might want to highlight along with the chronological themes or within chronological periods. I suggested that within each time period, we might try to emphasize such themes as Fort Snelling, Saint Anthony Falls, the Mississippi River, or the farm landscape, depending upon the availability of works. Minnehaha Falls was the choice. I felt the Falls should be a separate area of the exhibition because of its overall importance and the unique position it occupied in Minnesota's artistic history.⁴ Nelson-Mayson concurred with this idea. We decided that this breakdown could serve as the working model for the exhibition. We also developed the title for the show at this time: *An Artist's Paradise: Minnesota Landscapes 1840-1940*. The next step would be to locate works for inclusion in the show.

First, we decided to explore museums that would be likely lenders to the show. Second, we would look at private collectors as possible lenders. Nelson-Mayson suggested that I compose a letter that we might send to the museums inquiring as to what they might have in their collections that would be appropriate for the MMAA's exhibition. We were not asking for loans at this point. We also decided to conduct

this inquiry via email. The letter varied slightly, depending on which institution to which we were writing, but basically each letter included the following components:

- 1) What the MMAA was proposing to do.
- 2) Thesis statement for the exhibition.
- 3) Dates of the exhibition.
- 4) Introduction of Lin Nelson-Mayson and myself.
- 5) Artists we were looking for.

Using various resources, museum publications, the Minnesota History Center's Visual Image Database, and two of Rena Neuman Coen's books-Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota 1820-1914, and Minnesota Impressionists-we determined which museums we should query first. These museums included the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Hennepin History Museum, the Minnesota History Center and the Weisman Museum of Art.

After the initial inquiries had been sent out, the MMAA decided to move up the opening date of the exhibition from April to January of 2003. This meant that our time to locate, select and request pieces would be greatly handicapped, because we now had only two and half months to gather works for the show. We also, at this time, felt this decision would ultimately dictate how big the exhibition would be-because the show would be completely dependent on the holdings of museums we initially contacted, and that we would have little time to work with private collectors.

·Fortunately, our worst fears did not materialize. The museums that we initially contacted were very open and willing to lend to the MMAA whatever pieces we

needed to mount the exhibition, and these museums also contained more pieces than we were aware of. Nelson-Mayson and I were invited to visit the each museum to select what we needed. The consensus seemed to be that these institutions had neither immediate nor long term plans to use the Minnesota pieces in any forthcoming exhibitions, and they were happy to have them be on view.

This altered how I was going to proceed with the balance of the research for the exhibition. The Minnesota Historical Society was most gracious in their response to our request for artwork, and in fact they would become the largest lender to the show because of the size and depth of their collection. The art collection of the Minnesota Historical Society contains over six thousand paintings, prints, and drawings done by Minnesota artists, or artists depicting Minnesota persons, places or scenery.

The Society's collection has been digitized and is available on the web. Consequently, I was able to download images from their web site of some of the artists we were interested in, as well as other images from the time periods in which we were interested. This allowed me to do a mockup of the exhibition. This mockup included works from the MMAA's collection as well. We were now able to determine which artists and scenes we still needed to balance the show. We compiled a list and set up appointments to visit the museums we queried.

It was necessary to begin exploring various aspects of Minnesota history in order to create a more in-depth context for the exhibition. The Minnesota Historical Society, of course, is an excellent resource for this purpose. Its art collections contain

over six thousand paintings, prints and drawings done by Minnesota artists, or depict Minnesota places, persons, and scenes. This collection has been digitized and is available on the web. The Society's library contains many monographs on Minnesota art as well as the papers of many artists and artist organizations. The Society's magazine, Minnesota History, also contains many articles pertaining to the art and artists of the state.

Using the resources of the Minnesota Historical Society, an intern from the MMAA began to search for biographical materials for artists to be included in the show, based on a list I had prepared. However, her internship expired before she could complete the project, and I had to finish it. Another intern began working on a timeline that included as many dates as possible that pertained to artists, art related events, art schools musetims, etc. When she completed the timeline, I looked it over and added to it additional items from my research as well general events from Minnesota's history in order to give it context. This timeline proved to be very useful as the research continued for the show because often times we could get a context for an Undated piece or an approximate date for a piece.

Lin Nelson-Mayson and I discussed the mockup of the exhibition to determine which artists we would still like to include, as well scenes we felt were missing. With this information in hand, we scheduled appointments with the curators at the following institutions: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Hennepin History Museum, Weisman Museum of Art, and the Minnesota Historical Society. These visits were very productive. Each curator either had the works they felt that we would be interested in

ready for us to view, or they took us to their storage areas and let us peruse the artworks for ourselves. Nelson-Mayson and I compiled notes describing the pieces that we had seen and gave the curators a tentative list of items that we would like to use. The curators wanted these tentative lists in advance of our formal requests because they wanted to start their own internal evaluation process.

This process entailed having the conservators at each institution evaluate the pieces to determine if they were stable enough to be loaned, or to determine any restoration that may be needed and the related *costs*. This was a bigger issue than usual because of the length of the exhibition, and the number of pieces we were requesting. *An Artist's Paradise* was going to run almost six months, and the usual time for an exhibition is two to three months, which is about the average amount of time recommended for pieces to be exposed to light. This is more critical for works on paper than oil paintings. Framing needs also had to be considered. Most works on papers, such as prints and lithographs, are not framed. Any costs that would be incurred would be negotiated between the MMAA and the lending museums.

Hennepin History Museum had a large collection of Minnehaha Falls related items that it offered to lend. These items included souvenir plates, cups, and other trinkets that contained images of Minnehaha Falls. We felt that these items would work very well in the segment of the exhibition devoted to the role of Minnehaha Falls because they would help emphasize the importance and popularity of Minnehaha Falls. One item in particular was unique. It was a large glass tube filled with sand and crushed stone from the Falls. The sand and stone was arranged inside the glass tube in

pattern reminiscent of Southwest sand painting. Between the sand, stone, and glass were images of the Falls done by an early Minneapolis photographer, Joel Whitney. Later research indicated that this photograph was indeed a Whitney photograph, but it was a Whitney photograph of the Falls by Gilbert Munger, a Duluth-born painter.⁵ We determined that this object was probably handmade—a commemorative piece celebrating Minnehaha Falls.

Using the list I had prepared during my internship, Lin Nelson-Mayson and I began to analyze which pieces from the MMAA's collection would be appropriate for the show and to see what condition they were in. This was necessary because many of the pieces were not on display in the galleries, but were in storage. If restoration work or frames were needed, this would have to be known in advance in order to insure that they would be ready for the exhibition. One compelling reason for determining these needs was financial. If another museum that we had contacted would offer us a piece on the condition that the MMAA would pay for the conservation or cleaning of it, we would have to decide where we would want to put our dollars.

Lin Nelson-Mayson and I met later to discuss which pieces we wanted to formally request from each museum. Once we had agreed which pieces would be most appropriate for the exhibition, we forwarded this list to Eunice Haugen, registrar and exhibition coordinator for the MMAA. Haugen would initiate the formal loan process. This process involved formally contacting the museums by sending them the formal lending agreement forms and a facilities report. A facilities report is a large comprehensive document that describes the physical facilities of the museum security,

climate controls, illumination, hours opened, layout, etc. The formal request would also include "ship by" dates in order to get pieces to the MMAA in a timely fashion.

The next step we took, after contacting the museums we identified as major lenders, was to contact other institutions that I had identified as having specific pieces that we were interested in obtaining. These were primarily pieces done by non-Minnesota artists, who were among the first artists to come to Minnesota to paint. These artists had also achieved national recognition in their day and are still studied today. The artists were Robert S. Duncanson, John Kensett, and BJO. Nordfeldt. The institutions that we decided to contact were Augsburg College, Howard University, Amherst College, Saint Louis Museum of Art, and the Minneapolis Club.

The response from these institutions was not as favorable as we had hoped. The Saint Louis Museum declined our request for its John Kensett *View on the Upper Mississippi* (Lake Pepin), Augsburg College agreed to loan its Nordfeldt Minnesota Farm scene and Amherst College agreed to send its Robert S. Duncanson's *Maiden Rock* (Lake Pepin).

Howard University initially declined, but eventually decided that it would withdraw its Robert Duncanson *Minnehaha Falls* from a show early, in order to accommodate our request. Howard liked the concept behind our exhibition and felt that the presence of the Duncanson piece would help further interest in him. It should be added that Robert S. Duncanson was of Scottish/African-American descent, who had the status of "freedman."⁶ The Minneapolis Club, which also owns a painting of Minnehaha Falls by Robert S. Duncanson, agreed to loan its Duncanson, on the

condition that the MMAA could supply a painting to replace its Duncanson. We were unable to comply with this request because of time constraints. These two versions of Minnehaha Falls were painted in 1862, when Duncanson visited Minnesota. The reuniting of these two paintings would have been a significant event for the exhibition because of the renewed interest in Robert Duncanson's work.

The next step in the process, now that we had made our selections of eighty pieces of art, was to determine how many "running feet" of art we would be working with. This was done by adding together the framed width of all of the pieces. If frame size was not available, the width of the artwork was used. This number would then be doubled to get the total, which for *Artist's Paradise* was 161 feet. This number would then be compared to the amount of wall space available in the MMAA's galleries, which is 360 feet. We knew at that point that we were going to have a big show!

I used a "wall plan" of the MMAA's galleries to do a preliminary layout for *Artist's Paradise*. I decided to follow a loose chronological order for hanging the works. A strict chronological order would be difficult to adhere to for several reasons:

- 1) The visual impact could be impaired if all the works on one wall were the same size.
- 2) The wall size might not accommodate the number of pieces wanted for the desired impact.
- 3) Frames, styles, and colors might clash.
- 4) It might be difficult to get the full impact of a theme if the works were scattered throughout the galleries.

The show would be arranged in five segments: 1840-1865, 1865-1890, 1890-1920, 1920-1940, and a separate area for Minnehaha Falls. I penciled in which pieces I would like to begin and end each section with, as well as the arrangement of the other pieces in between.

Nelson-Mayson and I began discussing how many text panels we wanted for the exhibition as well as what type of labeling we want to do. We decided to have five text panels, an introductory panel followed by three others describing each chronological period, and one for the Minnehaha Falls. We decided to limit the wording to 250 words per panel, excluding quotation. I agreed to write these panel statements. We decided to have individual labels for each piece of fifty to seventy-five words, excluding artist's life dates and title of the work. This was necessary, we felt, because many of the artists would be unknown to most visitors, because places depicted might need more clarification and because it might be necessary to give each piece more context. Nelson-Mayson and I agreed to work on the labels together. I would supply the initial text and she would edit. Label writing was completely new to me.

Nelson-Mayson and I also discussed what type of gallery handouts we would like to have. After some discussion, we decided to do a multi-fold brochure that contained the timeline of the exhibit. We felt that this would be appropriate because the main-theme of the exhibit was the attitude of Minnesotan's towards the land, as well as the development of the state's artistic heritage. In the timeline, we could feature various images from the exhibition as well. This timeline was "on and off"

during most of the planning for the exhibit because we were not sure if we would have the funds to pay for it. At this point, we felt that we had gone as far we could with the planning. The only immediate need we had was to write the text for the panels because they were going to be jobbed out. I completed the texts. I then directed my efforts towards any loose ends in terms of research.

Educational Programs for *An Artist's Paradise*

In order to plan the educational activities, it was necessary for me to meet with Anita Gonzalez, Ph.D., director of MMAA's educational programs. The MMAA has a large volunteer docent staff and one of the main educational programs is docent training. Gonzalez and I decided to do the docent training in three installments. Normally, there are two, two and half-hour docent training sessions per week. It is the same program repeated. Anita adjusted the training schedule to accommodate my schedule because I was unable to do six separate sessions but could do four sessions.

The training would consist of two lectures and a walk-through of *An Artist's Paradise*, and selected readings. The first lecture presented an overview of American Art History from 1840 to 1940, with examples of Minnesota art interjected. The rationale was that this was necessary in order to establish a context for the Minnesota art. For example, I would show a slide of a work by a more nationally know artist, followed by a painting in a similar style by a Minnesota artist. The second lecture dealt exclusively with the works included in *An Artist's Paradise*. The purpose of this lecture was to explain the rationale for the inclusion of the pieces in the show. This was an excellent opportunity to thematically present the exhibit. It was also an

opportunity to share my research with the docents who have to use this information along with the readings to develop their own tours. The docents also received copies of all text panels, labels, the timeline, and list of the works included in the exhibition.

Gonzalez also asked me to participate in a panel discussion regarding the show. Other participants included Lin Nelson-Mayson and Brian Scotz, curator of Minnesota Historical Society's art collection. Each of us was given fifteen to twenty minutes to speak, followed by questions. The panel discussion concluded with gallery walks led by the three of us, each of us highlighting works from our presentations.

The education department also is responsible for the selection of books that the MMAA sells with each exhibition. Tami Miller, the Assistant Director of Education, asked me select some titles that I thought might be appropriate. This was not an easy task, since books on Minnesota artists are not in ready supply. Listed below are the titles I suggested:

- 1) Minnesota Impressionists by Rena Neuman Coen.
- 2) The Gag Family: German Bohemian Artists in America by Julie L'Enfant
- 3) North Star Country by Meridel Le Sueur
- 4) Minnesota by William E. Lass
- 5) Wall to wall America: A Cultural History of Post Office Murals in the . Great Depression by Karal Ann Marling

Final Plans and the Opening

Lin Nelson-Mayson announced in late November that she had taken a job with Exhibitions USA and would be resigning her position at the MMAA. She said she

would be available through December, but on a limited basis. This was not good news. In essence, this meant that after her departure, any final decisions regarding the installation of *An Artist's Paradise* would be mine.

Nelson-Mayson and I reassessed our priorities. There were two issues that I felt were necessary to have her involvement in because they were new to *me*. The first was that a private collector had contacted the MMAA and said that he had a landscape painting by Barton S. Hayes. This was a surprise, as we knew very little about Hays, and our research seemed to indicate that he was primarily a painter of still life's and portraits. Nelson-Mayson and I went to visit the collector. He not only had one landscape by Hays, but two! The subject matter of each piece could not have been more appropriate, as well. One was an early painting of the mills located on Saint Anthony Falls. This painting, we later found out, was done from a photograph taken in 1857. The second painting was of a boy fishing on Minnehaha Creek. These paintings were welcome additions to *An Artist's Paradise*. He also had a work by Knut Heldner, an artist that we wanted to include in the exhibition, but were unable to locate a suitable example of his work. He also had two paintings of Fort Snelling done by Alexis Fournier that he was willing to lend. This was also a welcomed addition because the Minnesota Historical Society was unable to lend the Fort Snelling works we had requested, and they were the only ones we had located prior to this time. Nelson-Mayson was able to work out the loan arrangements with the donor.

The next thing that we that felt that we had to take care of before Nelson-Mayson left was writing the labels. Initially, we agreed that we would write them

together. Time was going to allow this, so in order to take advantage of her expertise, I took several afternoons off from work to work on the labels. We felt that this way I could get a start and get Lin's input. Prior to this, I had written one label for an assignment in my Museum Studies Class. I completed twenty labels during this time. This was very useful, since I had prototypes with which to compare new labels. We had one final discussion as to what type of gallery handouts we wanted to produce. We still liked the idea of using the timeline. Nelson-Mayson began work on designing the time-line. However, the time-line became an "on and off" project because we were uncertain if we would have funding for the handout. We finally received approval to print the timeline, but Nelson-Mayson had left. Anita Gonzalez finished the project.

By mid-January, all of the artwork had arrived at the MMAA. Eunice Haugen and the installation crew began to ready the gallery for hanging the exhibition. Haugen and her crew began laying out the artwork according to the preliminary plan that I had drawn up earlier. Basically it worked, but there was so much variance in size, that we had to reconsider where some of the pieces were going to be hung and how they were going to be hung in order to maximize space and still achieve a strong visual appearance. This whole process resulted in removing two pieces from the show, which was not an easy decision. One piece, Nicholas Brewer's *View from Dayton's Bluff*, in particular, was problematic for several reasons: its size, style, and date of creation. Chronologically, this piece belonged in the 1920-1940 grouping, but stylistically it was forty years out of date and its size clearly stated this fact. We felt it

was still an important piece, but could not be included in the 1920-1940 section. We compromised by hanging it outside the gallery that contained *An Artist's Paradise*, but was quite visible as you entered *An Artist's Paradise*, under the heading "new in the collection."

Two reviewers had made arrangements to see the show prior to its opening. They were Doug Hanson of the *Star Tribune* and Marianne Combs, Producer of Minnesota Public Radio's *Word of Mouth*. Angela Benson, the MMAA's publicist, asked me to be present to field any questions that they might have, which I was. The Saint Paul *Pioneer Press* sent its reviewer, Tom O'Sullivan, over two weeks later and again I was asked to present.

The doors of *An Artist's Paradise* opened to the public on Saturday, January 25, 2003. All the artwork arrived on time, as did the text panels and labels. The MMAA did not hold an opening celebration due to the reduced economic circumstances of the museum. The exhibit was publicized through banners on the Landmark Center Kiosk in St. Paul, MMAA's newsletter, and postcards.

Notes to Chapter One

¹ Minnesota Museum of American Art Collection Development Plan.
Minnesota Museum of American Art, Collection Committee. 2000.

² James C. Kelly and M.S. Rasmussen, The Virginia Landscape: A Cultural History (Charlottesville, VA: Howell Press, 2000).

³ Rena N. Coen, Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota, 1820-1914 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Minnesota Historical Photo Collectors Group, Joel E. Whitney: Minnesota's Leading Pioneer Photographer: Catalog de Visite (St. Paul, MN: The Group, 2001).

⁶ Joseph D. Ketner, The Emergence of the African-American Artist: Robert S. Duncanson 1821-1872 (Columbia, MI: University of Missouri Press, 1993).

Chapter 2

AN OVERVIEW: *AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA LANDSCAPES: 1840-1940*

Introduction

The landscapes in the exhibition span one hundred years of Minnesota history, but they are more than that. They represent both the artistic interpretations of the land and the experiences that have shaped the state. Early artists who came to Minnesota worked primarily in the French Barbizon or the Hudson River Style, emphasizing the grandeur of nature. As Minnesota's connections to the nation and the world increased, some artists softened their views of the land through the stylistic lens of impressionism; other adopted the sharper edges and principles of European Modernism. Throughout this progression of styles, the one constant was the attitude toward the land: a sense of promise. Landscape painting cannot always be trusted to provide clues as to how particular places looked in the past, just as we can not depend on them to be a reflection of the artist's preferences; but we can read a landscape painting to be a special structuring of reality that enjoyed a measure of popular acclaim.¹

The sense of promise or potential of the land that influenced so many of the early artists who visited Minnesota, as well as early settlers of Minnesota, can be

traced to many of the permutations or myths that surrounded the settlement of the American West. The nineteenth century, especially the early part, was a time when nature was passionately scrutinized. A careful study of nature was sure to reveal the intentions of God. Nature was incorrupt and in the eyes of the Americans, and no part of the world was as rich with promise as their Western territories. The West with its landscapes of unimagined grandeur surely had been put there by special dispensation for the exclusive use of the white citizens of the United States. The West was viewed as the new paradise or Garden of Eden. Americans adopted the West as their past that embodied their spiritual traits, just as the English looked toward their Lake District and the Germans, the Black Forest for their spiritual connections with nature.²

An Artist's Paradise 1840-1890

William Goetzman, an historian of American exploration, referred to the nineteenth century as the "second great age of exploration."³ During this time, the islands of the Pacific were charted, the Antarctic was discovered, and the interiors of North and South America were mapped. What distinguished this "age of exploration" was that these lands were simply not discovered, but they were accessible to more people than the explorers. To the adventurous and wealthy, a trip to the interior of North America was a possibility. This accessibility would become the basis of recreational travel or tourism. These lands were also accessible to many through a variety of means to reproduce images. No matter how people experienced these new lands, "they brought with them a variety of notions concerning progress, race,

romantic imperialism and a great curiosity.'" The curiosity, above all, is what fueled the demand for images.

While the Western Paradise myth dominated nineteenth century thought in the United States, Americans had an almost insatiable appetite for news and images of the West. Because of this interest, Minnesota attracted painters from the East who traveled to the state to sketch and paint scenery. They found that scenes of Minnesota's forests and waters, in particular the Mississippi River, had a ready market on the East Coast and in St. Louis.⁵ The popularity of illustrated travel accounts and books, as well as the panorama, also contributed to this demand for images. Early artists who came to Minnesota, such as Henry Lewis, Adolf Hoeffler, Alfred Bricher Thompson, Thomas P. Rossiter and Joseph Meeker, hoped to capitalize on these markets.

Adolf Hoeffler, a German-born artist, came to New Orleans in 1848. In 1849, he made a sketching trip up the Mississippi to St. Paul. These sketches served as the basis for the woodcut illustrations that accompanied a July 1853 Haroer's New Monthly Magazine article authored by Hoeffler, entitled "Sketches of the Upper Mississippi River." The illustrations featured in this article included Fort Snelling, Lake Harriet and Lake of the Isles as well as Browns Falls, as Minnehaha Falls was called then.⁶

A new type of publication was making its debut in the early nineteenth century, the travel book. These books were very popular because they contained woodcuts and engravings. One of these travel books was Meyer's Universum, a

publication sold in serial format Hermann J. Meyer published the Universum. He moved his business from Germany to New York where his publication had met with considerable success.⁷ The expressed purpose of the Universum was to "meet a great and increasing want of the American public by laying before it a work designed to afford a living and intimate acquaintance with natural scenery, historical monuments and social peculiarities of every people."⁸ The Universum included engravings of Niagara Falls, Constantinople, the Tower of London and a view of Saint Anthony Falls. This inclusion of Saint Anthony Falls is indicative of how popular Minnesota and its natural features were becoming.

The panorama was an entertainment form unique to the nineteenth century. The panorama was essentially a large canvas mounted on two rollers that was unfurled by turning a crank that pulled the canvas across the stage. In many ways, the panorama was the first motion picture. Panoramas were very popular in both Europe and the United States. The uniqueness of the panorama was such that in December of 1848, an article in Scientific American was devoted to the workings and popularity of the panorama.⁹ Popular topics for panoramas included Egypt, London, and the Mississippi River. The most famous of these panoramas was John Banvard's "Three Mile Picture, the Panorama of the Mississippi River." Banvard's panorama, though its length may be questionable, presented the scenery of the Mississippi from St. Louis to New Orleans.

Henry Lewis, a young English-born artist who immigrated to Saint Louis, decided that he was going to paint a panorama. His panorama was going to be

different be different from the other panoramas of the Mississippi River. Lewis was to begin his panorama in Minnesota, at Saint Anthony Falls, and end in St. Louis.

Towards this end, Lewis made several sketching trips up the Mississippi to Saint Anthony, between 1846 and 1847. His complete panorama was twelve feet high and 1,325 long and cost an estimated \$15,000.¹⁰

Unfortunately, we do not really know what Lewis's Panorama actually looked like, but we have a fairly good idea. He kept an extensive journal of his sketching trips, which is extant and there still exists several oil paintings by Lewis that were based on sketches for his panorama project.¹¹ The two of these painting included in *An Artist's Paradise* are of Saint Anthony Falls, painted about six years apart. The earlier of these two paintings, done in 1848, is a fairly faithful rendition of how the Falls appeared to Lewis. It is documentary in nature. The second painting, completed in 1855, is quite different. The Falls are depicted as higher and more powerful, the sky a clear view with white clouds rolling towards the West. Clearly, Lewis had added more interpretative elements to his 1855 work. Lewis used the proceeds from the sale of his panorama to finance his art education. In 1855, he was an art student in Diisseldorf Germany and he was clearly painting for different reasons. He had moved from his earlier documentary style to the more romantic style of the times.

From the 1820s on, artists had recognized the economic importance of travel scenes, apart from panoramas or illustrations for magazines. Artists like John Kensett had been painting for this market for quite sometime. Kensett's paintings of the Hudson Highlands, Lake George, and Mount Washington all helped popularize these

places as tourist destinations.¹² In 1855, John Kensett made a trip to Minnesota, perhaps to profit from the popularity of the Mississippi River and Minnesota. He painted a scene on Lake Pepin and Minnehaha Falls.¹³ What was perhaps more important about Kensett's visit was that it prompted other painters to follow his lead.

Thomas Rossiter, a New York based painter, was primarily known as a portrait painter of historical and religious subjects, but occasionally did landscapes. He traveled throughout Europe in the 1840s with John F. Kensett and John W. Casilear. He returned to Europe again in 1853 before settling permanently in New York in 1856. He came to Minnesota between 1858-1859, perhaps at the urging of John Kensett, who had visited the state two years earlier.¹⁴ *Rossiter's Minnesota Prairie* was painted during this trip to Minnesota. Minnesota had just entered the United States as the thirty-second state and Rossiter's work is flush with optimism of the new state. Its broad sweeping horizon seems to suggest endless possibility; the entire painting is bathed in golden light, which blesses the farm scene depicted.

Alfred Thompson Bricher, a New England painter, made his way to Minnesota to paint in 1866. Thompson's motivation for coming to Minnesota may have been the popularity of Minnesota as a tourist spot. Other painters like John Kensett, Eastman Johnson, Albert Bierstadt, and Robert Duncanson had already visited Minnesota. The popularity of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's The Song of Hiawatha, possibly brought them to Minnesota. Longfellow's popular work extolled the simple life of the Native Americans and it was also the first major literary work to incorporate their legends. The poem also celebrated the beauty of the Minnesota lakes and woodland.¹⁵

Minnesota became associated as the Land of Hiawatha because of the presence of Minnehaha Falls.

Bricher traveled to Minnesota on a steamboat in 1866, sketching as he traveled. *Barn Bluff at Red Wing* was painted from sketches Bricher made during his Minnesota trip, but it does not depict the wilderness as untamed, it tends to be more picturesque. The picturesque is a style that tended to emphasize a harmonious relationship between man and nature. Picturesque works tend to reflect a domesticated nature, a nature tamed by man. The gentle lighting of the painting gives the illusion that nature is eternal, real, but affected by civilization. This is most evident by the railroad bridge Bricher added to the scene. This bridge could be interpreted as the coming of civilization.

James D. Larpenteur used elements of the picturesque in his 1888 "*St. Paul from Pig's Eye*." The autumnal view of St. Paul from Pigs Eye depicts St. Paul in the distance at the base of a long, gentle sloping hill. The river valley seems to engulf the city, as cows graze and a couple perched on top the hill appear to be gazing at the city.¹⁶

Joseph Rusling Meeker was another traveling artist who came to Minnesota to sketch and paint. Meeker was an artist who is commonly associated with Missouri. Meeker possessed an intimate knowledge of the Mississippi River. During the Civil War, he worked on a gunboat as a paymaster. As Meeker traveled on the river, he began to sketch the surrounding countryside, especially the bayous. After the Civil War, he returned to St. Louis to set up a practice as an artist. He specialized in bayou

scenes that depicted the heavy, dense flora of the bayous as well as their heavy atmospheric conditions.¹⁷

Between 1870 and 1880, Meeker made several trips to Minnesota to paint. In 1873, the *Lake City Leader* noted his presence at a party at the popular Lake Side Hotel in Frontenac on August 14, 1873.¹⁸ The Lake Side Hotel was a popular tourist hotel owned by Israel Garrad. Garrad was so taken by the beauty of the scenery on Lake Pepin that he moved there permanently from Kentucky and founded the town of Frontenac.¹⁹ During that year Meeker painted *Sunset Moon Rise, Lake Pepin*. This painting is less about Lake Pepin but more about the time of the day. The subject is the short time at dusk, when the sun and the moon are both visible. A critic in the *Daily Missouri Democrat* said of Meeker and *Sunset Moon Rise*:

"Meeker has produced some exquisite landscapes this winter, few of which have been painted to order this artist specialty has been a portrayal of Southern swamp scenery ... His pictures of scenery on the Upper Mississippi are greatly admired ... *Sunset on Lake Pepin* is one of his latest."²⁰

Meeker's *Minnesota Harvest Field* depicts a farm that is being carved out of the land on the banks of Lake Pepin. The harvest is depicted as bountiful. It shows a field full of grain yet to be harvested and several large stacks of straw. Like Thomas Rossiter's *Minnesota Prairie, Harvest Field* depicts the bounty and promise of the new land.

This painting is significant for reasons other than its subject matter. The late Rena Coen, in her book, *Minnesota Impressionists*. suggests this painting is an example of "pre-Impression" painting in Minnesota. Coen bases her argument on the fact that the painting has a low horizon line, the colors are loosely brushed in "but

clear, bright and distinct in the enveloping atmosphere of a sunny afternoon."²¹ She also suggests that though Meeker may have never seen French Impressionism, the fact that he insisted on the primacy of direct experience, rather working from memory is a link between him and the Impressionists. *Sunset Moon Rise, I feel*, also could be considered an example of early Impressionism because its subject matter is really the time of the day. Light at certain times of the day was another popular subject of the impressionists.

Edwin Whitefield, who came to Minnesota first in 1855, was different from the other artists who had come or who would later come to Minnesota during the mid nineteenth century. His work lacks the sophistication of Henry Lewis or Thomas Rossiter's, but art was not Whitefield's purpose. Whitefield was a real estate speculator and an artist. Prior to coming to Minnesota in 1855, Whitefield had published several lithographs of various cities in the United States that he sold on a subscription basis. When he came to Minnesota in 1855, he felt that Saint Anthony's Falls and the young town of Minneapolis would make "a capital picture."²² However, Minnesota must have sparked more than an interest in a "capital picture" in Whitefield. He returned to Minnesota in 1856 and organized the Whitefield Exploring Company. The purpose of the Whitefield Company was to develop sites for potential towns. Toward this end, Whitefield explored the area in what are now Kandiyohi and Stearns County and the Minnesota River Valley. He described these areas as a "farmer paradise" or "region more inviting ... cannot be found in the whole public domain."²³

Whitefield made over 150 watercolors of his town sites and farmlands. These watercolors were in effect his advertisements for his real estate business. He developed a display for the Minnesota Territorial Fair in 1856 or he would travel around the state showing his watercolors and pitching his lands and some of his watercolors were made into lithographs and circulated through out the county as advertisements. Whitefield's pictures could be considered a blend of realism and fiction. Overall, they depict the ease and quality of life that would be available to potential settlers. For example, his *In the Big Woods* depicts a man in his shirtsleeves leisurely chopping down a large tree near a nicely graded road. The woods have a minimum of undergrowth or brush, and in the background is a large cleared field. The overall impression is that it would not take a great deal of work to establish a farm on Whitefield's sites.

By the 1880s, Minnesota was no longer the frontier. Railroads were crossing the state and river traffic was plentiful. Minneapolis and St. Paul were rapidly expanding in population and industry was flourishing. This was due primarily to the development of industry around Saint Anthony Falls. Alexis Fournier, who was in his early twenties in the last half of 1880s, began to paint many pictures between 1888 and 1889 that documented this progress. His work, along with other painters of this time period, reflects several changes in attitudes among Minnesotans toward their land as well as changes in artistic tastes.

Fournier had a studio in Minneapolis over a tailor shop at 412 Nicollet Avenue in the 1880s. In some ways, the owner of this tailor shop was an early art patron

because he allowed Fournier to display his work in his street level windows.²⁴ In 1888, Fournier began painting a multitude of local scenes and displaying them in his shop windows. They must have been immensely popular because a great many of them have survived and are in the hands of several museums and private collectors. To Fournier's contemporaries, these paintings may have been viewed as evidence of progress because they depicted the new flour mills, grain elevators, river and rail traffic, and aspects of growth of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Stylistically, these paintings are rather direct, but there are some indications of stylistic change.²⁵

Minneapolis from the University Campus was one of the many 1888 scenes painted by Fournier. This painting celebrates the development of Minneapolis. The fact that this title mentions the University is a statement of progress in itself. Saint Anthony Falls is de-emphasized, but the development around it is featured. In the upper right corner is the Exposition Hall, which was built in 1886 to host fairs and other exhibitions to celebrate Minnesota made and grown products. This painting is a testimony to improvements made by man on the land. It is quite different from the works of Henry Lewis's that featured Saint Anthony Falls as a force of nature. Stylistically, the painting suggests several changes are occurring in Minnesota's art vocabulary. The low horizon line, the quick brushwork suggests a sense of spontaneity; these were traits of the French Impressionists. Fournier may have seen the works of the French Impressionists while he was working in Chicago for a fresco painter who was decorating the Potter Palmer mansion. The Palmer's were early collectors of French Impressionists.²⁶ Some of Fournier's 1888 scenes also had a sense of nostalgia about

them. His *Old Row at Fort Snelling*, depicts a proud, but closed and abandoned fort. Fort Snelling in 1888 was only used as a supply depot for the Dakota Division of the U.S. army. It was no longer the proud outpost of civilization as earlier painters had depicted it. Fournier still must have deemed it important to paint, perhaps because he felt it was an important symbol of the past and that Minnesota had advanced to the point that the Fort was no longer important.

Barton Hays may also have had a sense of nostalgia himself. Hays was a portrait painter who had worked primarily in Cincinnati, but moved to Minnesota in 1883. We know very little about Hays, perhaps this is do to the fact that he was a portrait painter and had steady income so there was no need to show his work or enter any artistic competitions. Hays' *Government Sawmill and Flour* may have been an effort on the part of Hays to recreate these old structures. The painting is undated, and has very distinct photographic quality to it. Hays carefully listed all the features of the painting on the back of canvas, but did not date it. The painting is an exact copy of a photograph taken of the same site in 1857. This photograph is in the collection of Minnesota Historical Society.²⁷ One can only speculate as to why Hays painted it; perhaps he had a commission to do so.

Saint Anthony Falls and the Minneapolis Exposition Hall by Alexis Fournier is a large painting. It is almost three feet by five feet. Fournier painted it in 1890 and James J. Hill purchased it.²⁸ In many ways, this painting symbolizes the changes that occurred in Minnesotan's mindset when it comes to nature. A harnessed Saint Anthony Falls, the Exposition Hall, and Lourdes Catholic Church dominate this

painting. Nature **has** been tamed for man's use, to ensure his progress. The presence of the Exposition Hall showcases this progress, and the presence of the church suggests that it was blessed.

By 1890, there had occurred several shifts in attitudes towards the land and nature and these shifts were being reflected in changes in and the acceptance of different artistic styles. The potential of the land depicted in the works of Meeker and Rossiter was now being realized. Agriculture was providing the raw materials that were fueling the burgeoning milling industry and feeding a rapidly growing population. The promises of the West were being fulfilled. Saint Anthony Falls, once a wonderment of nature as depicted by Henry Lewis, had now been harnessed for the benefit of man as depicted by Alexis Fournier in *Saint Anthony Falls and the Minneapolis Exposition Hall*. Early painters worked primarily in a realistic mode with origins in the prevailing styles of the time, such as the Hudson River School and the Picturesque; but by 1890 new artistic styles, most notably Impressionism, were working their way into Minnesota's artistic vocabulary.

Minnehaha Falls

When Fort Snelling was established in 1819, few would have predicted that Brown's Falls, or the Little Falls, a small waterfall northeast of the Fort, was destined for national acclaim. The transformation of Brown's Falls to Minnehaha Falls was not a straight path. This transformation was, in the big picture, tied to a variety of attitudes held by nineteenth century Americans. They were fascinated with the "picturesque," a romantic ideal of the grandeur of the American landscape. For many

years, *the natural features of the Hudson River Valley* were considered *to be* the prime example of *the picturesque*.²⁹ The search for the picturesque was the beginning of tourism for this region, but by the mid-nineteenth century, the emphasis shifted from the Hudson Valley to *the Mississippi River*.³⁰ Mark Twain also said of the Mississippi, "You'll find scenery between here and Saint Paul that can *give* the Hudson points."³¹

The picturesque elements of *the Mississippi River Valley*, in particular *the Upper Mississippi River* from Prairie du Chien to St. Paul, began to capture the imagination of those in pursuit of the picturesque. Edwin Whitefield, who made his to trip to the Upper Mississippi in 1856 from Galena, could see "nothing remarkable" about the scenery until he was beyond Prairie du Chien, "the views increased in variety and interest I never saw any country which pleased me half so much...Nothing of *the kind can be imagined more beautiful*."³² It was *the Falls of Saint Anthony* and *the Little Falls* that would reign supreme in the quest for the picturesque in the Upper Mississippi Valley.

Henry Lewis helped popularize Saint Anthony Falls in his panorama of the Upper River, but he may also have included a view of the Little Falls. After selling his panorama, Lewis went to Diisseldorf, Germany, to study art. *He* did not forget his Minnesota sketches. He worked with a German publisher to produce an illustrated book called: Das Illustrierte Mississippithal. The text and illustrations in this book came from his notes and sketches he made from his trips to Minnesota between 1846

and 1848. It was this material that served as the basis for his panorama. Das Illustrierte Mississippithal contained a sketch of the Little Falls.

Mary Henderson Eastman, wife of a military officer at Fort Snelling, Seth Eastman, popularized the Dacotah of Minnesota through her writings. Her 1849 book, *Dacotah Life and Legend of the Sioux*, was extremely popular. Seth Eastman, a captain in the United States Army, stationed at Fort Snelling, 1841-1848, was also an artist. Mary Eastman's works included her husband's watercolors. One of her later works contained a poem called *Laughing Waters, or Minnehaha*. "The Dakota Word for 'waterfalls', 'haha' is a reduplication of the adjective ha, meaning curled, and thus means 'curling' (of the waters) ... From the same root are derived iha' to laugh (reduplicated: ihaha 'to laugh at')." According to native custom, it was not necessary to include "mini."³³ Henry Lewis first applied the name "Minnehaha" to Saint Anthony Falls. Mary Eastman's poem reassigned the name to the Little Falls.

Travel writers, such as Adolf Hoeffler, also began to focus on these two waterfalls, in particular the Little Falls. Writing in an article published in Harper's Magazine in 1853, he wrote "I stood in mute admiration for a long time, before I could tether to paper as far as possible, the beauty of this cascade. These Indians, in their exquisite appreciation of nature, have given this waterfall the appropriate name of Minnehaha of the Laughing Water."³⁴ Hoeffler's use of the name Minnehaha possibly reflects the popularity of the new name that Mary Eastman bestowed on the Little Falls.

Nineteenth century Americans had mixed views towards the Native American. The majority felt that they were obstacles to progress and should be removed from the land. A minority of Americans held a more romantic attitude towards the Native American. They felt that they were noble savages, living in an unspoiled environment in perfect harmony with nature, free from all the constraints of civilization. Others felt that they were the descendents of some long lost heroic race. George Catlin perhaps best represents these attitudes. George Catlin devoted his entire life to documenting and painting the Native American.³⁵ He toured his paintings throughout the United States, England, and France. His motives may not have been entirely altruistic, but his touring show helped reinforce the notion of the Native American as the noble savage and helped generate interest in the Native American.

Interest in the Native American continued to grow. The United States government financed many survey reports and books that reported on the conditions of the West.³⁶ The government, in 1847, financed the publication of a large ethnographic study by Henry Schoolcraft entitled: Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States Collected and Prepared Under the Direction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs per act of Congress March 3rd 1847. This book also contained seventy-six color plates from Seth's Eastman's sketches and watercolors from his Minnesota days at Fort Snelling.³⁷ American literary figures, such as William Cullen Bryant, Washington Irving, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow were quite interested in the Native American topics, and they received free copies of these government publications (Dippel1990). These

works had a significant impact on Longfellow. He was already familiar with some of his Schoolcraft's earlier works in *Algic Researches*, a publication devoted to the study of the American Indian. This work may have helped Longfellow visualize settings for his interest in the Native American and the Mississippi River. *Evangeline*, written in 1847 was set in the Mississippi Delta.

The year 1854 was significant for Minnehaha Falls. In 1854, a rail-river connection was established at Rock Island, Illinois. This was an important because it was the first rail link between the east coast and the Mississippi River. Travelers could now travel by rail to Rock Island and board a steamboat and travel directly to St. Paul. This event was celebrated in style. Seven steamboats were filled with travelers including former President Millard Fillmore, historian George Bancroft and Benjamin Silliman of Yale. Charles A. Dana, former editor of Meyer's Universum and editor of *United States Illustrated* was also on board one of the boats. They were met in St. Paul by Territorial Governor, Henry Sibley.³⁸ The fashionable tour marked the beginnings of tourism to Minnesota.

Tourism continued to grow and the popularity of Minnesota's scenery soon had had a national reputation. This all enhanced the reputation of Minnehaha Falls, to which the Little Falls was now referred. Mary Jones, a tourist who came to Minnesota in 1855, perhaps best described the new found notoriety of Minnehaha Falls, "We went to the Falls (Minnehaha) that fell about sixty feet, they are said to equal Niagara."³⁹

The other significant event of 1854 was the publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's The Song of Hiawatha. Longfellow's epic poem was set in Minnesota with a heroine named Minnehaha. It was the first work of American literature to recognize Native American legends as powerful themes for literature. Longfellow drew heavily on the works of Henry Schoolcraft and Seth and Mary Eastman for much of his information about the Native American.⁴⁰ The poem also appealed to its audience because it captured many of the romantic notions of the Native American as the noble savage. The Song of Hiawatha sold more than 10,000 copies shortly after it was published.

Longfellow apparently saw a daguerreotype of Minnehaha Falls sometime prior to the writing of The Song of Hiawatha. Alex Hesler had given the daguerreotype of Minnehaha Falls to his friend, George Sumner who in turn showed it to Longfellow. According to Sumner, Longfellow was so inspired that he "selected Minnehaha and took it out into the woods with him and from it conceived and thought the poem Hiawatha."⁴¹

The demand for images of Minnehaha Falls increased after the publication of the Song of Hiawatha. Robert S. Duncanson, a Scottish African American freeman, was a painter in Cincinnati. Duncanson, in the words of his biographer, Joseph D. Ketner, "achieved unprecedented renown in the art world of antebellum America, despite the adversity he faced as a freeborn 'person of color,' earning national reputation and international acclaim for his landscape paintings."⁴² Duncanson received a commission from L. C. Hopkins of Cincinnati, in 1862, to paint Minnehaha

Falls.⁴³ He came to Milllesota in the summer of 1862 and on his trip to Milllesota he painted several Milllesota sites, including the Maiden Rock on Lake Pepin and two versions of Minnehaha Falls. Duncanson's portrayal of Millleehaha Falls included a sitting Indian woman. This woman was, no doubt, meant to be Millleehaha.

Millleehaha Falls became a popular subject to paint, if not an icon for Minnesota at this time. The list of the artists who painted Millleehaha Falls is lengthy. It includes for example, John Kensett, who painted it for his friend, Henry Longfellow, and Albert Bierstadt. Bierstadt painted the Falls in 1886, while he was in Millleapolis visiting his friend, T. B. Walker. Bierstadt's small painting features Walker's young son, Archie, in the foreground.

The image of Millleehaha Falls was also reproduced in daguerreotypes and on International Order of Odd Fellow Medals, bookmarks, and souvenir plates, pens and postcards and countless other places. Perhaps the most unique piece of Minnehaha Falls' ephemera is a large sand filled glass tube mounted on a pedestal. This object, in the possession of the Hennepin History Center, dates to 1888. The sand is layered in the glass in a manner that resembles the sand painting of the Southwestern United States. Pressed between the sand and the glass is photograph of Minnehaha Falls. The photograph is photography of a painting of Minnehaha Falls from the studio of Joel C. Whitney._

Millleehaha Falls, without the publication of *The Song of Hiawatha*, probably would have become a popular attraction in the nineteenth century. However, it was the publication of the poem that helped transformed it into an icon for Milllesota.

Minnehaha Falls became a symbol for the natural gifts that made Minnesota prosperity possible.

An Artist's Paradise. 1890-1920

By 1890, Minnesota could no longer be considered the frontier or the West. Railroads laced the entire state and connected it to Chicago and the East. It was the recognized flour-milling center of world because of bounty of state's agriculture. Minneapolis and St. Paul was considered to be the regional economic and population hub for the Midwest. Modern conveniences, such as electricity and telephones, were making their debut. In short, Minnesota was considered to be one of the fastest growing areas in the nation.⁴⁴

The prosperity of the state was celebrated at Minnesota Day on October 13, 1893 at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Over 20, 000 Minnesotans gathered on the exposition grounds to celebrate their state. The governor, Knute Nelson, spoke to the crowd extolling the accomplishments of Minnesota. The statistics, said Nelson, "of resources and possibilities, the growth and progress of Minnesota, read like a fairy tale." Governor Nelson also went on to point out that "this earthly paradise is complete and the fit home of a thrifty and hardy race ... surrounded with atmosphere pure, health breeding and work inspiring." Nelson concluded his speech by promising to "make manifest to the world the potential of her (Minnesota's) soil, her climate and her institutions and her people."⁴⁵

Minnesota's artistic development reflected these prosperous conditions. The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts was founded in 1883. The Minneapolis School of

Art was founded in 1886 and the Saint Paul School of Fine Arts in 1894. New Uhn boasted of an art school in 1892. Duluth founded its arts institute in 1907. Many smaller communities such as Faribault, Red Wing, and Winona had groups that fostered the arts.⁴⁶ Wealthy citizens of the state, such as T. B. Walker and James J. Hill, began to serve as patrons to a variety of artists. Through this patronage, many of Minnesota's young artists were able to go to Europe or the East Coast to study. Patronage, in combination with the developing interest in the arts, meant that more art was being produced in the state. This was in contrast to earlier times, when most artists only traveled to Minnesota to paint. Minnesota was now training its own artists and was developing a climate that could sustain them. The result of this was that art produced in the state began to reflect more broadly the trends of European and American Art. This was *also* the period when women began to enter the art world.

The early career of Alexis Fournier in many ways typifies this period of Minnesota's art history. Fournier established his first studio in Minneapolis in the mid-1880s. According to his biographer, Rena Coen, he took classes briefly at Minneapolis School of Art, though he did not formally enroll.⁴⁷ James J. Hill, the railroad baron, purchased several of Fournier's works to hang in the new home he was building on St. Paul's Summit Avenue. Hill later commissioned Fournier to paint, from a photograph, St. Paul's first Catholic Church for a gift to Mary Hill, his wife. In 1893, Hill, along with others, financed Fournier's first trip to Europe. While in France, Fournier associated and studied with many European and American artists.⁴⁸ After

several trips to Europe, Fournier in his work began *to* focus on the study of light and atmosphere similar to the French Impressionists.

Minnesota Lake Scene, painted *by* Fournier in 1902, is indicative of the impact of his time in Europe. His use of the moonlight, reflection, and a dark palette gives the painting the feeling of a warm summer night. The subject matter also is a departure for Fournier. This painting depicts a different use of the landscape, recreation. Minnesota Lakes were becoming a popular place for people to go and relax to escape the heat of the city.

Nicholas Brewer, born in Olmstead County in 1857, wanted to be artist from boyhood. His father could not afford to finance his son's education, but he did give him forty bushels of wheat to get his art education started. Brewer sold the wheat and went to St. Paul to study under an artist named Henry Koempel. Brewer eventually went to New York where he studied with Dwight William Tryon and Charles Noel Flagg.⁴⁹ Brewer earned a national reputation as portrait painter. His subjects included governors of various states, as well as presidents.

Brewer also painted landscapes, which was his first love.⁵⁰ Initially he painted in the French Barbizon mode, which was probably due to the influence of Tryon and Flagg, but he eventually moved towards Impressionism. Brewer's *Cutting Wheat at White Bear*, painted in 1900, is an example of one of his better executed landscapes. This somewhat nostalgic view of a farmer harvesting his wheat crop is bathed in golden light, which is reflected by wheat in the field, blessed *by* a blue sky and suggests the bounty of the land.

Anton Gag arrived with his parents in St. Paul from Bohemia in 1873. The family eventually settled in New Ulm, Minnesota. Anton followed his boyhood ambition to be an artist. Gag's art came to the attention of August Schell, a brewer in New Ulm. Schell decided to finance Gag's art education by sending him to Chicago to study at the Art Institute of Chicago. Gag went to Chicago, but did not enroll at the Institute. Gag may have studied at a smaller school or with another artist. When he returned to New Ulm in 1881 he began his career as a professional artist.⁵¹ Gag painted portraits, was a photographer, painted churches and murals and even started an art school in New Ulm.

Two of Gag's landscapes, *Landscape Hills* and *Farm Scene*, both painted in 1890, give the impression that Gag painted them spontaneously because of their fresh color and quick brush strokes, a trait of the Impressionists. Scholars seem to differ on this matter.⁵² But regardless of whether or not Gag was working in an Impressionist mode or from Gag's own sense of place or attachment to the land, these two works prove that "art can and does flourish even in pioneer communities far from the acknowledged centers of artistic production."⁵³ Minnesota's artistic climate was indeed flourishing in areas outside of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Not all the landscapes produced in this period were optimistic and hopeful. Peter Lund's *Logged Over Hills, North Minnesota*, painted in 1900, stands in sharp contrast to most of the landscapes produced at this time. As the title implies, this painting depicts a logged over area of northern Minnesota. Lund holds back no punches. The stark hillside is populated with tree stumps, the water in the river is

discolored and in the distance is a tall smoke stack belching out black smoke.

Unfortunately, we know very little about Peter Lund.⁵⁴ We do not know if this work was meant to be a political statement in support of the conservation movement that was sweeping the country at this time. The U.S. Bureau of Forestry established a forest preserve in Minnesota (later the Chippewa national Forest) in 1902.

Nevertheless, Lund painted a very powerful piece documenting the destruction of northern Minnesota as a result of excessive lumbering and other industrial practices.

The demand for images of Minnesota scenery continued. The Detroit Photographic Company published seven photochromes depicting Minnesota scenes. These scenes included: Fort Snelling, Lake Superior/the Drive on Presque Isle, St. Paul, Fort Snelling/Old Watch Tower, Duluth from Cascade Park and two versions of Minnehaha Falls. Photochromes are not color photographs, but rather a continuous-tone color rendition of a black and white photograph that uses multiple impressions from lithographic stones.⁵⁵ The penny postcard had just come into existence and William A. Livingston recognized the economic potential of the photochrome for postcards and larger souvenir pictures. Livingston hired the famous photographer of Yellowstone Park, William Henry Jackson, to join his firm as an artistic editor. In its heyday, the Detroit Photographic Company published over seven million prints.⁵⁶

The Mississippi River continued to be a popular subject for artists. *Itasca: Origins of the Mississippi River*, painted in 1915 by Edwin Dawes, does not depict any development on the Mississippi, much like the Henry Lewis' views of the River. This painting, with its muted colors, grassy foreground, a breeze stirring the trees, depicts

the humble origins of the Mississippi River. Dawes was born in Iowa in 1872. He came to Minnesota with intentions of becoming a serious artist in 1892. Recognition was a long time coming. In 1913, three of his paintings won a gold medal for "general accomplishment in local themes."⁵⁷ He won other awards in 1914 and 1915, but he left the state for California where he died in 1945.

A noticeable change in the artistic development of Minnesota during this time period was that women were entering into the artistic profession. Alice LeDue and Alice Hugy were two early Minnesota women artists.

Road with Telegraph Poles painted by Alice Le Due in 1915, is a warmly lit painting that depicted an unidentified rural road lined with the telegraph poles. The poles do not appear invasive on the land, but blend in quite nicely as if to suggest a harmonious blend of nature and technology.

Alice Le Due was born in Hastings, Minnesota in 1868. She attended art school briefly in St. Paul in 1897. In 1901, Alice and her sister Florence formed the Hastings Needlework Work Company. Alice designed patterns for the company. The company was successful; it had customers in Minneapolis, Chicago and New York. In 1903, House Beautiful ran an article describing the business. This is another indication that the artistic climate of Minnesota could support an arts based business. Le Due apparently painted privately or for friends. When she died, her paintings were given to the Minnesota Historical Society along with a family history. Alice's father was General William Le Due; General Le Due served in the Civil War and was the United States Commissioner of Agriculture in the Rutherford Hays administration.⁵⁸

The Saint Paul Pioneer Press in 1967 called Alice Hugy a "pioneer commercial artist and matriarch of the St. Paul Art Community."⁵⁹ Hugy was 91 when this article appeared in the Pioneer Press. She was probably Minnesota's first female commercial artist. Hugy attended, but never graduated from, the St. Paul School of Fine Arts. At the age of 16, she created ads for Hamm's and Grain Belt Beer and other businesses in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Her signature account was the New England Furniture Company of Minneapolis. She also created "Priscilla," the company's trademark image.

Alice Hugy was six years old, in 1882 when her Uncle Rene' Vilatte moved his family and Alice from their home in Solothurn, Switzerland to Cherokee Avenue in St. Paul. Cherokee Avenue would remain Hugy's home for all her life. In 1923, she made an impassioned plea before the St. Paul City Council to save several trees that were scheduled to be felled to make room for a road and the city relented.⁶⁰ This spirit is what were perhaps the underpinnings of Hugy's 1915 painting *Saint Paul from Cherokee Heights*. This painting depicts the city of St. Paul nestled under a bright blue sky, with the Mississippi wrapping itself around the city.

Magnus Norstad celebrated St. Paul two years later in a much grander fashion. His painting, *The City on the Hill*, features St. Paul as the symbol of the prevalent theme in American intellectual history that the New World was a new Garden of Eden and the cities of the new world represented a new Jerusalem. The idea of a New Jerusalem goes back in European history to St. Augustine, who had visions of an eternal city. Thomas Jefferson reinterpreted Augustine's city to mean the cities in the

New World. Worsted's *City on the Hill* won a silver medal at the Northwestern Artist's exhibit in 1917. Apparently life in the New Jerusalem was not for Norstad. He left his adopted city of St. Paul and moved to Valhalla, New York.⁶¹

The period from 1890 to 1920 was more than a formative period in the development of art in Minnesota. The art produced in the state began to reflect the latest trends in American and European art. The artistic community was not just confined to Minneapolis and St. Paul; artists like Anton Gag were working in the rural area of the state and Minnesota was able to attract artists. Edwin Dawes moved from Iowa to Minnesota. Nicholas Brewer maintained his ties to Minnesota, even though his portraits had a national demand. However, in spite of these accomplishments, there still lingered a sense of self-consciousness about distance between the Minnesota art community-its collectors, art going public and the artist themselves, and the national and international art centers. This self-consciousness was balanced by an appreciation of Minnesota Art's community by its own potential. The surest index of this, according to one scholar, of Minnesota's successes "it seemed was the approval of out of town commentatorsand when local talent took up local subject matter, a more confident demeanor emerged"⁶² Consequently Modernism was embraced with confidence.

An Artist's Paradise: 1920-1940

The New York Armory Show of 1913 was the first exhibition in the United States that presented a challenging sample of the modernist effort of European and American artists. The show traveled to Chicago and Boston and it is estimated that

over three hundred thousand saw the exhibition.⁶³ In 1914, a portion of the Armory Show crune to Minneapolis and was displayed in the galleries at the public library.⁶⁴ It is not known how many Minnesotans attended this special exhibition, but the art produced in the years between 1920 and 1940 certainly reflected the impact of Modernity. This was perhaps the richest and most diverse period in Minnesota's artistic history.

Modernity was not the only contributing factor to this richness. To be sure the variety of artistic styles was greatly increased, but the development of strong artistic communities made it possible for artists to gather together to share ideas, techniques, and offer support. The *Nimbus Club*, organized by Clara Mars, is one exrunple of these clubs. The art schools of the state, most notably those in Minneapolis and St. Paul were flourishing, in particular in their ability to attract and retain popular and influential teachers. There were also venues for artists to display their work, such as the State Fair which was becoming a burgeoning venue for artists. Minneapolis had two museums, the Minneapolis Institute of Art and the Walker Art Gallery, and both Minneapolis and St. Paul had art dealers. This was also the time when many young Minnesota artists were also going to Europe to study, as part of their education. In addition this was a time when many artists were also leaving Minnesota to try their hand in the art markets of the East Coast.

The career of Dewey Albinson, in many ways, typifies the experience of the artist in Minnesota from 1920-1940. As a young boy growing up in Minneapolis, Albinson would go to the Walker Art Gallery on Hennepin Avenue to study painting

techniques. In 1915, he enrolled in the Minneapolis School of Art, which was located in the basement in the basement of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. After graduating from the School of Art in 1919, Albinson went to Woodstock, New York, to study under John F. Carlson, who had perfected the technique for designing daubs of color from trees, hills and fields. He won a scholarship to attend the New York Art Student League. After a brief return to Minnesota, Albinson left for France to study under cubist painters Andre La'horté and Roger Bissière.⁶⁵

Albinson became a great proponent of the beauty of the Minnesota landscape. In 1923, he told a reporter for a national arts magazine that he was sure "that there is no place in America in which it is better to paint than Minnesota ... It will not be many years before this state will become a magnet for a great number of artists who now flock to beauty spots in the East and Pacific coast."⁶⁶

One of Albinson's favorite places to paint was the St. Croix Valley. His *St. Croix in the Winter*, painted about 1920, shows some of the early influences of Modernism on his work. Large geometric shapes suggest the rocks and cliffs of the St. Croix; splashes of color form snow deposits on the rocks and dashes of magenta indicate the presence of sunlight. The water is greenish in tone as it washes over the rocks. This painting reflects Albinson's efforts to adjust elements of Modernism to the prevailing trend of realism in American Art.⁶⁷ This was not unique to Albinson; other Minnesota painters would adjust the wide and varied elements of Modernism to fit American Realism.

Clem Haupers, like Dewey Albinson, also began his art career in the 1920s. He attended the Minneapolis School of Arts, but never graduated. Haupers also went to Paris to study under Andre' Lhort, but left because he did not like L'Hort's approach to color. He returned to St. Paul and was active in Clara Mairs's art groups. He often said his real art education was the trips he took to Chicago to view the collection of the Chicago Art Institute. Haupers was an employee of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad and could travel for free on his pass. No doubt while visiting the collections of the Chicago Museum, he encountered its vast collection of French Impressionists paintings. Haupers main contribution to the artistic development of Minnesota was as an administrator. He served for many years as secretary of the State Art Society, which was responsible for the art exhibit at the State Fair. Haupers was the force behind the popularity of this venue. It was probably his years with the State Art Society that earned him his state director for the various WPA art projects in Minnesota, as well as work with Roiger Cahill, national director of the various WPA projects in Washington, DC.⁶⁸

Haupers did find time to paint. His paintings were full of color, which probably can be attributed to his exposure to the impressionists in the Art Institute of Chicago. His *Winter Sunset*, which was painted in 1928, shows his love of color. This winter scene consists of a large, white foreground with a cabin and trees in the background absorbing the setting sun. One slender splintered tree reflects back a brilliant orange ray of the setting sun as shadows fall over the snow.

Cameron Booth, who was called the dean of Minnesota painters by one scholar, began his career in the 1920s. Booth, through his teaching and work, did more to foster the growth of Modernism than any other painter at this time. Booth's movement towards Modernism was not dramatic or sudden. There are indications of his movement in this direction in his earlier works.⁶⁹ After graduating from high school in Moorhead, Minnesota, he enrolled in the School of Art Institute of Chicago. While in Chicago, Booth took the standard courses offered at the school, but studied the impressionist paintings of the museum. He also attended the Armory show when it came to Chicago. He would later study in Paris with Andre L'Hote and Hans Hoffman. Booth's first job when he finished art school was teaching at the Minneapolis School of Art. After one year of teaching, he took a leave of absence. He spent that year on the Leech Lake Reservation in Northern Minnesota. The paintings he produced that year launched his career as a painter. Booth entered three of these paintings in the thirty-sixth Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture in Chicago. His work received critical acclaim and the Newark Museum of Art purchased one of these works.⁷⁰

Booth painted *Indian Camp, Leech Lake Reservation* after his sabbatical in 1923. This painting shows Booth's deep understanding of the Ojibwe people and the place of the earth in their culture. In this work, Booth has flattened out the picture plane to the extent that the picture is nearly void of perspective. The result of this is the depiction of Indian life appears to be one with the earth and the sky. This connection is strengthened by Booth's exclusive use of earth tones for coloration of

the piece. The figures and objects depicted are loosely formed, as if to suggest what they represent. The most unique aspect of this work is the application of the paint. It appears as if Booth used his thumb to apply all the paint.

Impressionism did not disappear completely during this time; in fact it remained quite popular. This is an indication of the extent that Minnesotan's embraced this style. Nicolas Brewer was 63 and well past the mid point of his career when he painted *Winter Scene* in 1920. *Winter Scene* depicts a harsh Minnesota winter night, with a train rushing through the landscape. The steam from the engine, the clouds, and the snow covered landscape all blend together against an icy blue. Olaf Aalbu's impressionistic interpretations *Winter River (Minnehaha Creek)*, which was painted about 1920, indicates the continued popularity of Minnehaha Creek and Falls as subject matter for painters. In this painting, Aalbu left parts of the canvas exposed to compliment the blues in the painting.

Carl Rawson quit his job as a cartoonist at the Minneapolis Tribune in 1915. He wanted to devote his time to being an artist. Born and raised in Iowa, Rawson first attended the Cumming School of Art in Des Moines, later the Minneapolis School of Art, and finally the National Academy of Design in New York.⁷¹ What is significant about Rawson is that when he finished art school, the style he chose to work in was impressionism. His schooling occurred roughly at the same time that Booth, Haupers and Albinson attended the Minneapolis School of Art, yet he chose impressionism.

Rawson's *Minneapolis from Cedar Lake*, which was painted around 1920, is a view of Minneapolis from Cedar Lake, one of the city's lakes. Rawson's *Minneapolis*

is very reminiscent of Alice Hugu's view of *St. Paul from Cherokee Heights*. Both artists wrapped the cities in the elements of nature; both cities are sheltered by a blue sky and a body of water.

The Great Depression of the 1930s hit Minnesota hard. The optimism that was so characteristic of the 1920s was gone. Iron mining in northern Minnesota came to a standstill and farmers were forced off their lands as their crops dried in the field. Manufacturing slowed to a trickle and there were violent labor struggles, such as the trucker's strike of 1934. Curiously, the art produced in the state at this time was among some of the best ever and often times did not totally reflect, totally, the harshness of the times.

This was the case for several reasons. Prior to the Great Depression, many of Minnesota's artists would often leave the state to try their hand in the art markets of the East Coast. Artists like Adolf Dehn and Wanda Gag had established themselves as artists in New York. Dewey Albinson tried to establish himself in New York in 1932. The Depression, amongst other things, caused the art market to collapse in New York. Erfe Loran, a Minnesota artist himself, returned from Europe to New York in 1936. The first thing that struck him was the question of what happened to his fellow Minnesotans. He answered this question in an article he wrote for *The American Magazine of Art* in 1936, and concluded that they exercised the only option that local artists had: 'to depict the scene that they were born in and the one they should know best and to do this many artists returned to Minnesota or they began to depict the local scene in their works.'

The art market in Minnesota, like the New York market, had collapsed. Erle Lorán wrote that the Art Institute (Minneapolis), which for years had "graciously fostered the work of local artists by holding yearly competitive exhibitions ... for the last two years the patrons and trustees have been unable to raise funds for the customary ten and twenty dollars prizes.⁷⁴ Many of the artists could depend on their families for basic substances, but fortunately for many artists they could find employment in the variety of federal arts programs administered by Clem Haupers.

The American Scene movement was a factor in Minnesota Art during this time. The term "American Scene" does not signify an organized movement, but rather a broad tendency for American artists to represent aspects of American life and landscape in a naturalistic and descriptive style, nor did it represent an organized group with a shared core philosophy. American Scene painters were quite diverse in terms of style and outlook. There are no paintings, for example, that epitomize the movement.⁷⁴

There also does not appear to be an agreement as to when the American Scene movement began. Some scholars suggest that this movement is an offshoot of the genre painting of the early nineteenth century, which celebrated the everyday aspects of American life. Robert Henri, at the turn of the nineteenth century, again began to portray the every day aspects and people of American life. Henri's influences continued through the 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁵ Some scholars do not acknowledge these early origins. They argue instead that the American Scene movement was a product of 1930s, with some antecedents in the 1920s.⁷⁶ Regardless of its origins, many

Minnesota painters were part of the movement because it provided a philosophical link to the earlier traditions of celebrating the land.

One aspect of the American Scene movement was that it was a movement of hope and optimism. There was a desire to document the look and the feel of the country. This is evident in the works of the 1920s, such as Rawson's *Minneapolis from Cedar Lake*. This sense of optimism was transformed in the 1930s to a search for a usable past. This search is what caused a split in the movement. The labels applied to these factions are less than adequate, but they do help in understanding the dichotomy that existed in the movement. Social realists concentrated their efforts on the urban and rural poor and the economic injustices of the times. The Regionalists, more commonly associated with Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry, generally refers to artists who choose to paint certain regions of the country. Their work was generally apolitical and sometimes nostalgic.⁷⁷ The regionalists were generally branded as reactionary and conservative, but this was probably due more to their association with Thomas Hart Benton's politics, than the movement itself. Minnesota painters fit nicely into the American Scene movement as many of them were already working with subject matter.

The nationalism that was embedded in the American Scene Movement marked a general return, but not a complete abandonment of the elements of Modernism, to realism. This meant that there was an effort to detach American Art from foreign entanglements. If the true nature of America was to be portrayed, how could it done with foreign techniques like exaggerated forms and color? This effort to free

American art from outside influences began a re-examination of American artistic traditions. These efforts did not turn back the tide of Modernism; they merely held it a bay. Americans began to demand an art that was accessible and comprehensible to the ordinary person, that was "capable of moving him nostalgically, politically and esthetically by means of commonly recognizable images presented in easy understood styles."⁷⁸ In some sense, the American Scene movement was viewed as a renaissance in American Art. The Whitney Museum of American Art, the first museum devoted exclusively to American Art, was founded in 1931.

In 1932, Dewey Albinson moved back to Minnesota from New York, ending his association with the Delphic Studios. That summer, he received a commission from a local railroad to paint scenes of northern Minnesota. By December 1933, he was active in the New Deal's Public Work of Art Project. Inbetween these duties Albinson found time to paint on his own. His portrayal of Franklin Mine, located near Mesaba Mountain in St. Louis County, reflects his interest in Modernism because he treats the land as formal blocks of muted colors. This presentation downplays the land as a material and economic resource, but it also does not depict the mine as abandoned. Viewers of *Franklin Mine* could stiU recognize it as Franklin Mine.

Sanford Fennell, who studied art at the St. Paul School of Art and would later retire from St. Paul's Brown and Bigelow's art department, served as a watercolor instructor for several federally supported arts programs in Minnesota.⁷⁹ His 1934, *Eggs for Sale*, is the depiction of the countryside on a bright day. The land is somewhat barren which might suggest that it is early spring, but the golden hills and

bright light suggests a certain amount of optimism, even though the fanner may only have eggs to sell. Fennell's rendering of the countryside is fairly straightforward and realistic.

Glen Allison Ranney, another art project painter, painted *Golden Valley* in 1937. Ranney compressed the picture plane and there is very little depth in the painting. In the forefront of the painting is a fanner herding his cows; immediately behind him is his fann, with the city pressing upon it. In the midst of all of this, there are people working and going about their daily business. However, the facial expression of the fanner seems to suggest world-weariness and belies the otherwise optimistic tone of work.

Erle Loran, who taught art for a various New Deal art projects in Minnesota, painted *Hill and Fields* in 1931. This painting clearly reflects many elements of Modernism. Large blocks of green and yellow represent the crops in a rolling field under a bright sky. There is little definition of the plants or other features in the painting beyond suggestion. Paul Cezanne heavily influenced Loran as a student, and he would later write a textbook entitled Cezanne's Composition that became the staple in art schools for many years.

Not all Minnesota artists worked for the Federal Arts projects. Wanda Gag of New Uh}l, and daughter of Anton Gag, left Minnesota in 1917 for New York City.⁸⁰ Gag established herself as a printmaker and children's writer. She produced many prints covering a wide variety of subjects, including landscapes. It is often difficult to determine what influences Gag was responding to. Her landscapes may have been

imaginary or a composite of her memories of Minnesota with her current life at Tumble Timbers, her studio in rural New Jersey, but they portray a land fused with energy. Gag's 1935, *Spring on the Hillside (Farmland)*, shows well-ordered farms, surrounded by bountiful fields that stretch into the horizon as far as the eye can be see.

Adolf Dehn, a native of a Waterville, Minnesota, went to New York after graduating from the Minneapolis School of Art in 1917. He encountered almost immediate success as a printmaker and watercolorist. Like his friend Wanda Gag, his prints covered a wide variety of subjects including landscapes, but unlike Gag, his landscapes were based on his Minnesota memories. He left behind a large amount of letters ranging from 1916-1941 that speaks of his fondness for his home state. He also visited Waterville often during his life.⁸¹

Dehn's *Carver County Summer Afternoon* is a large panoramic view of a farm in Carver County, Minnesota. This large canvass shows a very prosperous farm full of activity: livestock fill the pens, people are working in the farmyard, and fishing on the lake. The crops appear to be bountiful. In many ways, this painting is reminiscent of the large landscapes that were so popular in the nineteenth century, like James Larpenieur's *St. Paul from Pigs Eye*. *Carver County*, like the Larpenieur work, emphasizes the grandeur of the land as well as its domestication.

Minneapolis (Skaters), a print by BJO. Nordfelt, is a portrayal of people enjoying a winter evening of ice-skating on a Minneapolis lake. This print is very rhythmic because of the graceful motion of the many skaters. It is also a good

example of an everyday activity that was such a popular topic for painters of the American Scene during the 1930s.

The 1930s produced some of the best art ever in the history of Minnesota for several reasons. The hard times of the era forced many of the state's artists to come home to work. Consequently, Minnesota scenes and subjects received the attention of highly trained artists who very well could have applied their talents elsewhere. The various federally funded art programs also helped artists find employment once they came back to Minnesota. The dominance of the American Scene movement in painting provided a comfortable and familiar intellectual framework for the artists to work within. The prevalence of the American Scene movement may have altered or arrested some of the artists' progression towards the trend of Modernism, but it still provided a nourishing environment. For some artists, like Wanda Gag and Adolf Dehn, it provided them an opportunity to return to local themes that their careers in New York may not have allowed. Finally, the intellectual underpinnings of the American Scene movements made it possible for the artists of the 1930s to adhere to the artistic traditions established by the early artists in the state, the potential of the land.

Conclusion

Minnesota artists from 1840 to 1940, in varying degrees, believed in the promise of the land. They interpreted the Minnesota landscape through a variety of changing artistic styles, always expressing their belief in land. These artists did not

develop a distinct or unique Minnesota style, but rather their works provide a link to the artistic heritage of the nation with a Minnesota perspective.

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⁵³ Coen, *Minnesota Impressionists*, 46.

⁵⁴ Marion J. Nelson, *Paintings by Minnesotans of Norwegian Background, 1870-1970* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2000), 82.

⁵⁵ Cardozo Fine Art, "American Photochrom Archive Gallery" in *Cardozo Fine Art* [database online]. (Minneapolis, MN: December 12, 2002). Available from [http://www. Photochromcollection.com/index. html](http://www.Photochromcollection.com/index.html).

⁵⁶ Cardozo Fine Art, "William Henry Jackson" in *Cardozo Fine Art* [database online]. (St. Paul, MN December 12, 2002). Available from [http://www.photochrom.com/WHJ .html](http://www.photochrom.com/WHJ.html).

⁵⁷ Coen, *Minnesota Impressionists*, 36.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 68-69.

⁵⁹ Minnesota Museum of American Art, *Curator Files, Alice Hugy*, n.d.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Coen, *Minnesota Impressionists*, 82.

⁶² O'Sullivan, 110-111.

⁶³ Hughes, 356-357.

⁶⁴ O'Sullivan, 111.

⁶⁵ Mary T. Swanson, "Dewey Albinson: the Artist as Chronicler," *Minnesota History* 52, no. 7 (1991): 264-278.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 269.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 269, 275.

⁶⁸ "Clement Haupers: Conversations on Six Decades of Painting in Minnesota," ed. Nicholas Westbrook, Minnesota History (1979): 296-299.

⁶⁹ Nina Marchetti Archabal, "Cameron Booth, 1892-1980, A Chronicle from His Scrapbooks," Minnesota History 47, no. 3 (1980): 100-103.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 103.

⁷¹ Coen, Minnesota Impressionists, 86-87.

⁷² Erle Loran, "Artists from Minnesota", American Magazine of Art 24, no. 1 (1936): 31.

⁷³ Ibid, 31.

⁷⁴ Matthew Baigell, The American Scene: American Paingint of the 1930's (New York, NY: Praeger, 1974).

⁷⁵ Richard H. Love, Carl W. Peters: American Scene Painter from Rochester to Rockport (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1999), 5.

⁷⁶ Baigell.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 18.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Suzanne F. DeBoom, "Minneapolis Artist: Stanford Fennelle," Hennepin History 56, no. 2 (1997): 4-15.

⁸⁰ L'Enfant and Paulson, 89-102.

⁸¹ Richard W. Cox, "Adolf Dehn: The Minnesota Connection," Minnesota History 45, no. 5 (1977): 167-186.

Chapter 3

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE ARTISTS

Introduction

This chapter contains brief biographies of the artists whose work was part of *An Artist's Paradise: Minnesota Landscapes 1840-1940*. The biographies are arranged alphabetically rather than in the order their work appeared in the exhibition. The amount of information available on the artists varied greatly. In some instances, there were complete books on an artist, such as Alexis Fournier; often articles were available or exhibitions catalogs. Curatorial files were also useful. In some instances, information was minimal; and in some instances, the only information available was the work itself.

Artist's Biographies

Olaf Aalbu. Aalbu was born in Norway on August 8, 1878. He broke his leg as a result of a fall and the break did not heal properly. Consequently, he was released from farm work and was allowed to attend art school in Trondheim. In 1902, he came to Minneapolis to work in his brother's saloon. Shortly thereafter, he joined the decorating firm of John S. Bradstreet. Among the Minneapolis buildings that Aalbu worked on included the Great Northern Depot, Commercial and University Clubs,,and

the old Radisson Hotel. Aalbu was a prolific painter throughout his life. He entered exhibitions sponsored by the Minnesota State Arts Society, the Minnesota State Fair, and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. After 1920, he participated in several exhibitions sponsored by the Norwegian Club in Chicago. His style of painting tended towards unusual color and light effects. Aalbu died at the age 47, from tuberculosis, in 1925.¹

Dewey Albilson. Dewey Albinson was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1898. His father owned a furniture and funeral business. He spent his summers at Lake Minnetonka. A neighbor gave Albinson a box of paints and brushes to help him pass the time while recovering from a childhood accident. Another neighbor, a commercial artist, encouraged his artistic efforts. As a boy, Albinson frequently went to the Walker Art Gallery. He enrolled at the Minneapolis School of Art in 1915. After graduation, he spent six months studying with John F. Carlson at Woodstock, New York. He also studied at the Art Student League of New York and studied in France under Andre L'Hote and Roger Bissiere'. He was a painting instructor at the St. Paul School of Art, 1926-1929. He was associated briefly with the Delphic Studios in New York in 1932, but returned to Minnesota that same year. During the 1930s, he worked for a variety of federally funded arts programs in Minnesota. His favorite topics to paint were the St. Croix River and Grand Portage, Minnesota. In the late 1940s, he divided his time between a home in New Jersey, near his friend B. J. O. Nordfeldt, and Mexico. He died in 1971.²

Arthur Allie. Arthur Allie was born in DePerre, Wisconsin on May 20, 1872. He studied briefly with Robert Henri in New York and then returned to St. Paul where he remained for the rest of his life. Nicholas Brewer, in his book Trails of a Paintbrush, referred to Allie as "the dear old socialist-an artist by nature as well as technique." Brewer went on to say that he had "so much respect for his own ideas and inclinations that he never would adopt those of anyone else."³ Allie is known mostly for his works in the 1930s and the early 1940s when he worked for a number of the federally funded arts programs. Allie died in 1953.⁴

Albert Bierstadt. Albert Bierstadt specialized in grandiose pictures of the American West. He was born in Germany in 1830 and came to the United States as an infant. He returned to Dusseldorf, Germany to study art from 1853-1856. When he returned to the United States, he joined the Lander Survey as an artist. The purpose of the Lander survey was to map an overland wagon route to the Pacific. It was the sketches from this trip that launched his career. Bierstadt visited several times in the 1860s and 1870s when he painted several scenes of Duluth. He returned to Minnesota in 1886 at the request of his friend, T. B. Walker. He exhibited his work in the Exposition Hall the same year. By the time of his Minnesota visit, his career was on the decline, several major shows, the Paris Expo of 1889, and the Columbian Exposition of 1893 rejected his works. He died nearly bankrupt in New York City in 1902.⁵

Lowell Bobleter. Lowell Bobleter was born in New Ulm, Minnesota in 1902. He attended art school at the St. Paul School of Art. He studied privately with George Resler and Cameron Booth. He became director of the St. Paul School of Gallery and School of Art. Bobleter was also superintendent of the Minnesota State Fair Art Show and was chairman of the art department at Hamline University. His work is in the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Walker Art Center, New York Public Library and the Smithsonian.⁶

Cameron Booth. Cameron Booth was perhaps the most influential artist in Minnesota's history. He was born in Erie, Pennsylvania in 1892. His family moved to Moorhead, Minnesota where Booth graduated from high school in 1912. Booth studied at the Art Institute of Chicago under H. M. Walcott who encouraged his interest in: Cezanne and cubism. He also studied with Andre L'Hote and Hans Hoffman in Europe. For nearly fifty years, most artists educated in Minnesota could point to Cameron Booth as their mentor. He taught at the Minneapolis School of Art (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design), the University of Minnesota and the St. Paul School of Art, which he later directed.⁷ Booth's work is included in the collections of the Minnesota Museum of American Art, Minneapolis Institute, Walker Art Center, the Guggenheim and Metropolitan Museum of American Art. Booth died in 1980 in Minneapolis.⁸

Nicholas Brewer. Nicholas Brewer, among Minnesota painters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, achieved the most national recognition. He

made his reputation as a portrait painter, but landscape painting was his passion. Brewer's subjects included many state governors, and President Franklin Roosevelt. Initially, he painted in the French Barbizon mode and, finally, Impressionism. Brewer was also a good friend of fellow Minnesota artist, Alexis Fournier. Brewer was born in 1857 in Olmsted County in Minnesota. He studied under Henry Koempel, an early St. Paul artist and in New York under Dwight Tyron and Charles Noel Flagg. Brewer recounted much of his life in his 1938 book, Trails of a Paintbrush. Brewer died in St. Paul in 1949.⁹

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Alfred Thompson Bricher. Alfred Thompson Bricher was born in 1837 in Massachusetts. He was largely self taught and possibly could have studied at the Lowell Institute. He became know primarily for his serene luminist seascapes, but he also painted in the resort areas of the White Mountains.¹⁰ He came to Minnesota in 1866, perhaps with an eye towards to the tourist market for western paintings. Minnesota was becoming a tourist attraction of increasing importance, luring artists to such landmarks as the Mississippi River and Minnehaha Falls.¹¹ After bis trip to Minnesota, Bricher spent the rest of his life sketching and painting the coasts of Massachusetts, Maine and Rhode Island. He died on Staten Island in 1879.

LeRoy Butscher. LeRoy Butscher was born in 1895 and painted for the WPA and Federal Art Project from 1937-1940.¹²

Edwin M. Dawes; Edwin M .Dawes, the son of Charles G. Dawes, vice-president under Calvin Coolidge, was born in Boone, Iowa in 1872. He was largely a

self taught artist according to his 1945 obituary in the Los Angels Times. He came to Minneapolis in 1892 and worked as a sign painter, but always with an eye towards more professional painting. In 1913, Dawes won three awards at the ninth annual exhibition of the Minnesota State Art Society. He left Minnesota the same year for California where he continued to paint. Dawes' work is included in the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Santa Fe Railroad Collection, and the Owatonna and Los Angeles public libraries. Dawes died in 1945.¹³

Adolf Dehn. Adolf Dehn achieved international acclaim for his drawings, lithographs and watercolors. He was featured in Life, Esquire and Coronet and professional artjournals and newspapers. His topics ranged from his satires of European cafe society to Minnesota scenes. Dehn was born in Waterville, Minnesota in 1895. He studied at the Minneapolis School of Art and later, the Art Student League of New York. During his years at the Minneapolis School of Art, he met Wanda Gag and the two became friends innmediately. Together they worked as artists for the University of Minnesota humor magazine, Minn-haha. Dehn was a ring leader amongst the art students in Minneapolis, and at his suggestion many students, including Gag, relocated to New York. Dehn went to Europe to study and travel throughout much of the twenties. In 1929, he returned to the United States where he began working on a variety of rural scenes based on his memories and experiences of Waterville. Adolf Dehn died in 1968.¹⁴

Robert S. Duncanson. Robert S. Duncanson was born in 1821 to parents of African and Scott-Canadian descent. His birthright allowed him freedman's status. As a young man, he worked as a house painter in Cincinnati, but he had higher aspirations. Duncanson's talents came to the attention of Nicholas Longworth, who commissioned him to paint murals for his home "Belmont." The Western Art Union began to sell Duncanson's landscapes and his reputation as a landscape painter began to grow. Duncanson soon enjoyed an international reputation.¹⁵ Due, probably to the popularity of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's The Song of Hiawatha, Duncanson received a commission from a patron in Cincinnati to paint Minnehaha Falls. In the summer of 1862, he made a trip to Minnesota to make sketches for this commission. Six scenes of the Upper Mississippi and Minnesota are extant from Duncanson's trip. Duncanson died ten years later in 1872.¹⁶

Stanford Fenelle. Stanford Fenelle was born in Minneapolis in 1912. His interest in art began while he was in the eleventh grade at Roosevelt High School in South Minneapolis. He studied at both the Minneapolis and St. Paul School of Arts. Fenelle and several other artists rented a house in Morristown, Minnesota in the early 1930s. This house was near where Cameron Booth was visiting his in-laws. Fenelle and Booth formed a long lasting friendship. Fenelle began to teach painting classes at the Saint Paul School of Art and Walker Art Center. He worked for the WPA art's project from 1933-1935 as supervisor of easel painting. In the midst of teaching, Fenelle had works on exhibit in the Brooklyn Watercolor show, Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco, as well as venues in

Minnesota such as the State Fair and Minneapolis Institute of Art. In 1942, Fenelle went to work for Brown and Bigelow, a large advertising company in St. Paul. He retired from Bigelow in 1974. During his retirement and up until his death in 1995, he continued to paint the rural towns, school houses, churches and the countryside of Minnesota.¹⁷

Alexis Fournier. Fournier was born in St. Paul, Minnesota on July 4, 1865. He moved with his family to Milwaukee, but returned to Minnesota in 1879 to establish himself as an artist. He began as a sign painter, but with the help of some patronage he was able to take art courses at the Minneapolis School of Arts. By the mid-1880s he had his own studio on Hennepin Avenue and began painting a series of local scenes that he displayed in the window of his studio. Fournier's talent soon came to the attention of James J. Hill. Hill, along with others, in 1893 financed Fournier's first trip to Europe, where he enrolled in the Academe Julien. Fournier returned to Minnesota, but in 1903 at the invitation of Elbert Hubbard, he became the artistic director of the Roycroft Arts and Crafts Community in East Aurora, New York. In 1915, Fournier moved to Brown County Indiana where he worked with a group called the Hoosier Impressionists. He continued to divide his time between Indiana and East Aurora until his death in 1948, but he still maintained his ties with Minnesota through exhibits at the Beard Gallery in Minneapolis.¹⁸

Anton Gag. Anton Gag was born in Nuestadt, Bohemia in 1859 and came to St. Paul in 1873. Gag was exposed to the arts in St. Paul. He saw the works of

Gilbert Munger, Joseph Meeker and Peter Gui Clausen on display and there is some evidence that Gag and Nicolas Brewer had met each other and perhaps worked together.¹⁹ He and his brother also had a photography taken at Whitney's studio. In 1879, Gag moved to New Ulm where he became a "jack of all trades" in the arts. He operated a photography studio, decorated started an art school and did a series of history paintings and a panorama based on the Sioux Conflict of 1862. Gag also painted landscapes of the New Ulm country side. In addition to all of this, he instilled in his children, especially his daughter Wanda, a love of the arts. Gag died in 1908 from a lung disease.²⁰

Wanda Gag. Wanda Gag, the oldest daughter of Anton Gag, was born in New Ulm, Minnesota in 1893.. There was little doubt in Wanda Gag's decision to become an artist. Her father had encouraged her artistic development from as soon as she could hold a pencil. Reportedly on his deathbed, Anton told his daughter "was der Papd niht thun konnt muss die Wanda halt fertig machen (What Papa was unable to accomplish, Wanda will have to finish).²¹ Wanda received a scholarship to attend the St. Paul School of Art. She later received a scholarship to attend the Art Student League in New York. In New York, she was able to successfully establish herself as a children's writer and illustrator. Her most famous work was Millions of Cats. Wanda also became a printmaker and the Weyhe Gallery of New York became her dealer. Wanda, like her father, died early. She died in 1946.²²

Gustav Fredrick Goetsch. Gustav Goetsch was born in Gaylord, Minnesota in 1877. He studied at the Minneapolis School of Art, the New York School of Art, and the Academie Julian in France. Goetsch also taught at the Minnesota School of Art and the University of St. Louis. Goetsch died in 1969 in St. Louis.²³

Barton S. Hays. Barton Stone Hays was born in 1826 in Greenville, Ohio. He was largely self-taught and began his career as portrait painter. He was an abolitionist and painted two panoramas relating to Uncle Tom's Cabin. He also taught art in various schools and gave private lessons. Hays most famous student was William Merritt Chase. In 1883, he moved to Minneapolis where he appears to have concentrated on still life painting for which he most famous. He died in 1914 in Minneapolis.²⁴

Emil Hastings. Emil Hastings was born in 1892. He attended the San Francisco Art Institute. Hastings had a dual career in art and music. He played in a band that played at the Palladium in London. Hastings moved to Minneapolis and married Lillian Anderson in 1932. Hastings worked as a commercial artist and apparently painted as a hobby. A critic in a Chicago paper wrote of Hastings' work "completes the list of discoveries that are candidates for the classification 'remarkable'." Hastings died in 1984.²⁵

Clement Haupers. Clement Haupers long career as an artist and as an arts administrator did much to foster artistic growth in Minnesota. Haupers was born in St. Paul on March 1, 1900. Haupers wanted to be an artist, but his economic

circumstances initially prohibited formal training in art. His first job, at seventeen was with the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. He often went to look at the art collections in Minneapolis at the Art Institute and T. B. Walker's Gallery; he also began checking out art books at the St. Paul Public Library. A librarian mentioned to him that the Art Institute of Chicago had a fine collection and that Haupers should use his free railroad pass to visit it, which he did repeatedly. He was finally able to afford art school, and he enrolled in the Minneapolis School of Art in 1921. The following month, he was named secretary of the Minnesota State Art Society. Haupers, in 1923, went to Europe with his friend Clara Mairs to study with the cubist painter Andre L'Hote. Upon returning to St. Paul, he resumed his activities with the Art Society and began to paint and exhibit. This mix of arts administration and practicing his art was a pattern that Haupers would follow all his life. He continued to work with the Art Society to cultivate the fine arts at the state fair until 1942. Haupers also held several administrative positions with the various fine arts projects of the New Deal at the local and national level. He continued to paint his favorite Minnesota spots, in the Minnesota and Mississippi River Valleys, in particular Lake Pepin. Haupers died in 1982.²⁶

Knute Heldner. Knute Heldner, the youngest of seven children, was born in Sveland, Sweden in 1877. He served in the Swedish Navy as a young boy. He began his formal education at the Karlskrona Technical Institute, but quickly returned to the sea as a cabin boy. Heldner immigrated to the United States and settled in Duluth. He worked at a variety of jobs such as lumber jacking, ore miner and farming. In his spare

time, he painted, sketched and carved. He studied briefly at the Minneapolis School of Arts and possibly the Art Institute of Chicago and Art Student League of New York. In 1920, one of his paintings won first prize at the Minnesota State Fair, which included a trip to Washington D.C. Heldner finally received the recognition that he had been seeking for twenty years. Through patronage, he was able to study in Europe for three years beginning in 1929.²⁷ Heldner's work is included in the collections of the Smithsonian, The Corcoran Gallery, and the National Gallery in Sweden. Heldner died in 1952.

Adolf Hoeffler. Adolf Hoeffler was born in Frankfort-am Main in Germany in 1825. He studied art under his father Heinrich, in Frankfort. In 1848, he came to New Orleans, but returned to Germany in 1853. While he was in America he traveled widely, painting and sketching. In 1849, Hoeffler traveled up the Mississippi to St. Paul. While in St. Paul, he painted a portrait of Mrs. Alexander Ramsey, wife of the governor of Minnesota, and her child. He also submitted several finished works of Saint Anthony Falls and Fort Snelling from his trip to Minnesota to the New York Art Union. In 1853, Hoeffler published two articles in Hamers Magazine: *Three Weeks in Cuba* and *Sketches of the Upper Mississippi*. Adolf Hoeffler died in Frankfort-am Main in 1898.²⁸

Julius O. Holm. Julius O. Holm was born in Norway in 1855 and died in 1930, probably in Minneapolis.²⁹

Jonas Holland Howe. Jonas Holland Howe was born in Petersham, Massachusetts in 1821. He wanted to be a painter, but his health required him to take up an active life of a farmer in a climate more invigorating than that of his native Massachusetts, so he moved to Minnesota in 1854. He moved to the area that is now Plymouth, a community he helped organize. Howe became active politically working with Oliver Kelley, and served in the Minnesota Legislature. He also helped found the Faribault School for the Deaf. Later in life he returned to an earlier dream of becoming a painter. How much time Howe devoted to painting is not known, but the Hennepin History Museum has four of his paintings in their collection. Howe died in 1898.³⁰

Alice Hugy. Alice Hugy was perhaps the first successful woman commercial artist in Minnesota. Alice Hugy was born in Switzerland in 1876. Alice came to St. Paul with her uncle in 1882. She never graduated from grade school, but she was in one of St. Paul's first art classes, and later took additional training at the St. Paul School of Art. When she was sixteen, she created the trademark ads for the Hamm's and Grain Belt Breweries. She also created "Priscilla," the image of the New England Furniture Company of Minneapolis. However, her specialty was images of young women in the "Gibson Girl" style, which she sold to hundreds of magazines.³¹ In addition to her commercial work, Hugy painted landscapes, portraits and still-life paintings. During the Great Depression, Hugy also painted for the WPA. Alice Hugy died in 1971 at the age of 91.³²

William Henry Jackson. William Henry Jackson, best known for his landscapes photographs of the West, was born in 1833 in Keesville, New York. He was the official photographer for Ferdinand Hayden U.S. Geological Surveys and it was his photographs that helped influence Congress to establish Yellowstone Park. He later joined the Detroit Photographic Company as an editor. At the age of 93, he painted a series of Western scenes for the U.S. Department of the Interior. He died in 1942.³³

Edna G. M. Kahlert. Edna G. M Kahlert was born in 1889. The Minnesota Historical Society owns seven of her watercolors. The subject matter of these works includes the Mississippi River, the grounds of the James Hill J. house, and other St. Paul scenes. Kahlert died in 1889.³⁴

Arnold Klagstad. Arnold Klagstad was born in Marinette, Wisconsin in 1898. Klagstad's father, August, was a well-known altar painter for Norwegian-American Lutheran churches. Arnold began his formal schooling, studying to be an electrician at Dunwoody Institute in 1921. In 1923, perhaps due to influence from his father, Klagstad entered a painting in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts annual exhibition for local artists. Two years later he enrolled in the Minneapolis School of Arts. Klagstad also studied at the Fontainebleau School of Art in France. He returned to Minnesota in 1931 and accelerated his pattern of exhibiting his works. This apparently worked well for him as he lists no other occupation other than artist. He worked for the several of the federally funded art projects in Minnesota. In 1940, The Metropolitan Museum of

Art purchased his 1937 painting, *Industrial Landscape*. Klagstad became the first Minnesota artist to be included in the Metropolitan's collection. Arnold Klagstad died in 1954.³⁵

James D. Lamenteur. James D. Larpenteur was born in 1847. In 1867, he left for France to study; he returned to St. Paul in 1883. Larpenteur specialized in European scenes, but occasionally painted local scenes. He assisted James. J. Hill in taking care of his art collection. He also served as superintendent of the State Fair's Arts Program. He died c. 1915.³⁶

Alice Le Due. Alice Le Due, the daughter of a Minnesota Civil War general and politician, was born in Hastings, Minnesota in 1868. Le Due briefly attended some unspecified art school in St. Paul in 1897, but painting appears to have been her hobby. Based on the extant paintings by Le Due, she seemed to work in the Impressionist style. In spite of social position, she sought employment outside of the home. Alice and her sister Florence started Hastings Needlework, a company which designed needlework patterns. The company was successful. It had customers in Chicago, New York and Boston. An October 1903 article in House Beautiful described the business and its products. Alice died in Minneapolis in 1962.³⁷

Henry Lewis. Henry Lewis was born in England in 1819. He came to the United States with his family when he was ten. In 1836, Lewis settled in St. Louis where he was employed as a scene painter. Between 1846 and 1848, Lewis made several trips up the Mississippi River to Saint Anthony Falls to sketch. He decided

that he wanted to paint a panorama. His panorama, unlike the other panorama of the Mississippi, would feature the Upper Mississippi. Lewis achieved considerable success with his panorama, so much so that he received an offer to sell it, which he did. He used proceeds from the sale of the panorama to finance his art education in Diisseldorf. Lewis never abandoned his experiences on the Upper Mississippi. While in Diisseldorf, he prepared his sketches for illustration to be used in a travel book called *Das Illustrierte Mississippthal*. The publisher went bankrupt shortly after publication, so Lewis never realized much financial benefit from this project. Lewis remained in Diisseldorf for the rest of his life, but while in Diisseldorf he met and befriended several American artists such as George Caleb Bingham and Albert Bierstadt.³⁸

Erle Loran. Erle Loran was born in Minneapolis in 1905. He attended the University of Minnesota from 1922-23, but transferred to the Minneapolis School of Art and graduated in 1926. He studied in Europe from 1926-1930 and with Hans Hoffman in New York in 1934, and Cameron Booth. He began exhibiting in 1924 at the Minnesota State Fair, and by 1934 his work was part of a traveling exhibition sponsored by Museum of Modern Art. In 1936, he authored an article that appeared in *The American Magazine Art* lamenting the absence of his fellow Minnesota artists in New York. In 1936, he accepted a teaching position at the University of California, Berkeley, where he remained for the rest of his life. He continued to paint and exhibit all the while he was at Berkeley. Loran died in 1999.³⁹

Peter Lund. Peter Lund, in the words of the late Marion Nelson, director emeritus of Vesterheim the Norwegian American Museum in Decorah Iowa: "Lund has for years been a mystery in Minnesota painting." Lund apparently had a studio in Minneapolis at one time and after 1890, a studio in Duluth. His extant paintings suggest that his specialty was marine paintings, in particular Great Lake scenes. Lund's *Logged Over Hills, North Minnesota*, included in *An Artist's Paradise* suggests that Lund had some lament over the inroads of industry on nature.⁴⁰

Clara Mairs. Clara Mairs was born in Hastings, Minnesota in 1878. Her first formal art training was at the Saint Paul School of Art. Mairs also studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. In 1918, she was back in St. Paul where she immediately became active in the local art community. Mairs organized the Nimbus Club, a club that afforded artists the opportunity to work with live models and meet other artists. Clem Haupers attended many meetings of the Nimbus Club. Haupers and Mairs became life long companions and housemates. Her primary interest was print making and her prints were included in Fine Prints of the Year, from 1929-1937, and in *Amerika*, a portfolio of prints sent to the Soviet Union in 1946, by the State Department. Mairs died in 1963.⁴¹

Alexander Masely. Alexander Masely was born in 1903 in Ackley, Minnesota. He studied art at the Minneapolis School of Art and the University of Minnesota. He also studied with Hans Hoffman and Cameron Booth. He taught at the University of Texas, Austin.⁴²

Joseph Rusling Meeker. Joseph Rusling Meeker was born in New Jersey in 1827. A local carriage painter noted Meeker's interest in sketching and gave him occasional employment. Meeker earned a scholarship to enter the Academy of Design in 1845. The academy was then under the direction of Asher B. Durand. Meeker eventually settled in St. Louis. During the Civil War, Meeker worked on a gunboat that patrolled the Mississippi. Meeker used this opportunity to sketch the river and its surroundings. After the War, Meeker resumed his career in St. Louis, where he began to capitalize on his sketching during the war. He became known for his swamp and bayou scenes of the Mississippi River. Several of his paintings bear titles referring to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1847 poem *Evangeline*. Between 1870 and 1880, Meeker made several trips up the Mississippi to Minnesota to paint. Meeker died in 1887.⁴³

Otto Moilan. Otto Moilan was born in Finland in 1881. He attended the Minneapolis School of Art. He painted murals for churches in Osseo and Virginia Minnesota. He died in 1937.⁴⁴

B. J. O. Nordfeldt. B. J. O. Nordfeldt was born in Sweden in 1878. In 1891, the Nordfeldt family immigrated to Chicago. Nordfeldt became a "printer's devil" for a Swedish newspaper. His employer at the paper encouraged him to enroll at the school at the Art Institute of Chicago; he later went to France where he attended the Academie Julien. When he returned to the United States, he was ready to begin his career. He established a studio in Chicago; he worked as an etcher at Harpers

Magazine and the Arthur H. Hahlo firm in New York until he finally settled in New Mexico. He left New Mexico to teach at the Minneapolis School of Art in 1933. Nordfeldt was well received, while in Minnesota, the Art Institute held an exhibition of Nordfeldt's work in 1933. He also befriended several local artists, including Dewey Albinson. The two of them would take sketching trips throughout the state. Nordfeldt left Minnesota in 1934 for Wichita Kansas. He returned to the Minneapolis School of Art again in 1944.⁴⁵

Magnus Norstad. Magnus Norstad, like Peter Lund, is a mystery in the Minnesota art world. He was born in Bodo, Norway in 1884. His family came to Seattle in 1911, but in 1905 Norstad went to New York to study at the National Academy of Design. In 1911, he moved to St. Paul where he began to work at a number of places including painting promotional pictures for the Great Northern Railroad. The only existing painting for his time in Minnesota is his *City on the Hill*, which won first prize at the Nonwestern Artist Exhibition in 1917. In 1919, he left Minnesota for Valhalla New York, where he remained until he moved to California shortly before World War II. He died in 1962.⁴⁶

Glen Allison Ranney. Glen Allison Ranney was born in Hustler Wisconsin in 1896. He studied at the Minneapolis School of Art with Cameron Booth. He also taught at the Minneapolis School of Arts and worked for WPA in 1937. He was known for his rural Minnesota scenes. He exhibited at the Minnesota State Fair, Art

fustitute of Chicago, and the Corcoran Gallery. Ranney died in 1959 in
 Minneapolis.⁴⁷

George Earl Resler. George Earl Resler was born in 1882 in Waseca, Minnesota. His family moved to the West Side of St. Paul in 1889. He became interested in art while a student at St. Paul's Humboldt High School. He later attended the Saint Paul School of Art and the Art fustitute of Chicago. He returned to St. Paul where he pursued his interest in etching through experinlentation and reading. Resler founded a commercial art :firm, which specialized inetchings and dry points with fellow Minnesota artist, Frederick Bock. fu 1926, a group of the city's art patrons funded Resler's studies in Europe. Throughout bis life Resler continued to produce city scenes of St. Paul. Resler later worked for the G. Somer Company. Resler died in 1954.⁴⁸

Carl Wendell Rawson. Carl Wendell Rawson was born in Van Meter, Iowa on January 28, 1884. He earned his money for his first art lessons by working as the secretary for the Des Moines Baseball Club. He attended art school at the Cummings School in Des Moines, the Minneapolis School of Art, and the National Academy of .Design in New York. Rawson moved to Minneapolis in 1906 to work as a cartoonist for the Minneapolis Tribune. However, the desire to try his hand at art full time won out, Rawson resigned from the Tribune in 1915 to paint portraits. The Mayo brothers were among his first subjects. He also painted landscapes. Rawson painted the Hudson River Valley in New York, scenes in Arkansas and the hills of east Texas.

His favorite place to paint, though, was Minnesota, in particular the north shore of Lake Superior. Rawson died in his Kenwood home in Minneapolis in 1970.⁴⁹

Josephine Lutz Rollins. Josephine Lutz Rollins was born in Sherburne, Minnesota in 1896. She studied art at the University of Minnesota where she earned her B.A and M.A. Rollins also studied at the Minneapolis School of Art with Cameron Booth and B. J. O. Nordfeldt. She also studied for one year with Hans Hoffman in Munich in 1931. She was a professor of drawing and painting at the University of Minnesota. Rollins also founded an art colony at Stillwater, Minnesota and the West Lake Gallery in Minneapolis. The West Lake Gallery was a women's cooperative specializing in art by women. Rollins was hired by the Dayton Department Store Company to paint the historic sites of Minnesota for Minnesota's Territorial Centennial in 1949. Rollins lived in Stillwater, Minnesota most of her life and the lakes and countryside of the Stillwater area became the subjects for many of her works. Rollins died in 1989⁵⁰

Thomas P. Rossiter. Thomas P. Rossiter, a New York based painter best known as a painter of portraits and historical paintings, was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1818. His formal training consisted of an apprenticeship in portraiture. In 1840s he traveled throughout Europe with John F. Kensett and John W. Casilear and the teacher, Asher B. Durand. He remained in Europe for six years. Rossiter returned from Europe in 1846 and shared a studio with John F. Kensett in New York. It was perhaps this connection with Kensett that prompted Rossiter to come to the

Midwest in 1858, and in particular Minnesota. Rossiter's work was known in the Midwest because, in 1851, some of his religious paintings toured some cities in the Midwest, Milwaukee and Detroit. Rossiter died in 1871.⁵¹

Jerome Thompson. Jerome Thompson was born in Middlebury, Massachusetts in 1814. His father, Cephas, was a portrait painter in the tradition of the itinerant limner. Young Thompson began painting, despite his father's objections, and in 1831 he left home in hopes of establishing himself as a portrait painter in Barnstable on Cape Cod. He moved to New York in 1835 and continued to paint portraits. Sometime after 1844, Thompson began to do genre paintings, a style he would continue to work in for the balance of his career and the style that he known by today. During the Civil War, Thompson and his son traveled to Minnesota. His son, Jerome, joined the Minnesota Volunteers during the War and Thompson bought a farm in Crystal. Thompson still maintained his studio in New York during this time and began sending western paintings back to New York. Thompson did a series of paintings based on Longfellow's Song of Hiawatha including Minnehaha Falls, which is considered to be one of his only "pure" landscapes. Unlike the imaginary landscapes he used as backdrops in his genre works, this work is his most spontaneous work. Daubs of paint, silvery and white colors, give the work an impressionistic quality. Rena Coen suggests that Thompson's Minnehaha Falls is one of the early examples of impressionism in Minnesota. Thompson returned to New York and resumed painting his genre works. He died in 1886.⁵²

Elof Wedin. Elof Wedin was born in Sweden in 1901. He immigrated to the United States in 1919. He studied art first at the School of the Institute of Chicago and then at the Minneapolis School of Art. Wedin completed murals for post offices in Mobridge, South Dakota and Litchfield Minnesota during the depression. Wedin also worked with Cameron Booth, Dewey Albinson, Arnold Klagstad, Stanford Fenelle, Syd Fossum and Erle Loran during the summer of 1934 to paint scenes of the University of Minnesota for the University. Wedin made several trips back to Sweden to paint. His work is contained in the collections of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Smith College. Wedin died in 1983.⁵³

Edwin Whitefield. Edwin Whitefield was born in 1816 in Ludworth, England. He came to the United States in 1836, where he may have been an agent for Godey's Magazine; he also augmented his income by giving art lessons and sketching estates along the Hudson River. In 1842, he began experimenting with lithography. In 1845, he published two large lithographic prints of Albany and Troy, New York. These two lithographs were followed by his series *Whitefield's Original Views of (North) American Cities and Scenery*. Whitefield continued traveling through out the United States and Canada, collecting views to add to subscription series. His travels brought him to Minnesota between the years 1856-1859. Whitefield became a real estate speculator. While in Minnesota, he developed a town site and promoted the sale of farm land he acquired in Stems County. He did a series of watercolors that he used as promotional materials for his real estate development. The results of speculations are lost, but his portfolio of his land remains. He returned to Massachusetts and resumed

his practice of producing city views. Whitefield died in 1892 in Dedham, Massachusetts.⁵⁴

Donald Taylor. Margo Sommers M.D. donated a work entitled *Farm* by artist Donald Taylor to the Minnesota Historical Society.⁵⁵

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¹ Marion J. Nelson, Paintings by Minnesotans of Norwegian Background, 1870-1970 (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2000), 68.

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³ Nicholas R. Brewer, Trails of a Paintbrush (Boston, MA: The Christopher Publishing House, 1938), 175-76.

⁴ Rena N. Coen, Minnesota Impressionists (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society, 1996), 20.

⁵ Rena N. Coen, Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota, 1820-1914 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 40; Falk and Lewis, 313.

⁶ Falk and Lewis, 359.

⁷ University of Minnesota, University Art Museum, American Paintings and Sculpture in the University Art Museum Collection (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1986).

⁸ Falk and Lewis, 380.

⁹ Coen, Minnesota Impressionists, 26.

¹⁰ Falk and Lewis, 438.

¹¹ Rena N. Coen, "Alfred Thompson Bricher's Early Minnesota Scenes," Minnesota History 46, no. 6 (1979): 233.

¹² Minnesota Historical Society, *Visual Images Resources*, LeRoy Butscher, available <http://collections.mnhs.org/visualresources/>, accessed Jan. 5, 2003.

¹³ Coen, Minnesota Impressionists, 36.

¹⁴ Richard W. Cox, "Adolf Dehn: The Minnesota Connection," Minnesota History 45, no. 5 (1997): 167-186.

¹⁵ Falk and Lewis, 980.

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¹⁷ Suzanne F. DeBoom, "Minneapolis Artist: Stanford Fenelle," Hennepin History 56, no. 2 (1997): 4-15.

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¹⁹ Julie L'Enfant and Robert J. Paulson, The Gag Family: German-Bohemian Artists in America (Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society, 2002), 38.

²⁰ Coen, Minnesota Impressionists. 45-46.

²¹ Rebecca L. Keim and University of Minnesota University Gallery, Three Women Artists: Gag, Greenman and Mairs (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 5.

²² *Ibid.*, 6-10.

²³ Falk and Lewis, 1309.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1505.

²⁵ Minnesota Historical Society, *Curator's File: Emil Hastings*, n.d.

²⁶ Jane H. Hancock, Clement Haupers: Six Decades of Art in Minnesota (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1979).

²⁷ Coen, Minnesota Impressionists. 54-56.

²⁸ John F. McDermott, "Minnesota 100 Years Ago, Described and Pictured by Adolf Hoeffler," ed. John F. McDermott, Minnesota History 33, no. 3 (1952): 112-114.

²⁹ Coen, Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota. 1820-1914, 60.

³⁰ Norman A. Geske, "A Pioneer Artist," Minnesota History 31, no. 2 (1950): 99-104.

³¹ Minnesota Museum of American Art, *Curator's File, Alice Hugy*.

³² Minnesota Museum of American Art, *Curator's File, Alice Hugy; Coen, Minnesota Impressionists*, 59-60.

³³ Falk and Lewis, 1705.

³⁴ Minnesota Historical Society, *Visual Images Resources, Edna G. M Kahlhert*.

³⁵ Nelson.

³⁶ Coen, *Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota*, 71; Thomas O'Sullivan "Robert Koehler and Painting in Minnesota," in Michael Conforti, *Art and Life on the Upper Mississippi 1890-1915, Minnesota 1900* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1994), 119.

³⁷ Coen, *Minnesota Impressionists*, 67-70.

³⁸ Patricia C. Johnston, "Henry Lewis: Landscape Painter of more than Ordinary Merit," *American History Illustrated* 17, no. 2 (1982): 29; "A Painting of Saint Anthony Falls," *Bulletin of the Minneapolis Institute of Art* 18, no. 9 (1929), 46-47.

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⁴³ Kathryn V. Dixon, "Joseph Rusting Meeker: the Land of the Evangeline and Beyond," *Gateway Heritage* 3, no. 3 (1982-83), 10-15.

⁴⁴ Falk and Lewis, 2305.

⁴⁵ Van D. Coke, *Nordfeldt, the Painter*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1972), 30, 33, 43, 78, 84, 109-110.

⁴⁶ Nelson, 86.

⁴⁷ Falk and Lewis, 2702-2703.

⁴⁸ "Sidewalks of St. Paul: the Etchings of George E. Resler," *Minnesota History* 40 (1967): 249-253.

⁴⁹ Coen, *Minnesota Impressionists*, 86-88.

so Falk and Lewis, 2815; *American Paintings and Sculpture in the University Art Museum* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 422.

st Falk and Lewis, 2836-2837; *American Paintings and Sculpture in the University Art Museum*, 431-432.

s² Lee M. Edwards, "The Life and Career of Jerome Thompson," *American Art Journal* 14 (Autumn 1982): 5-30; Coen, *Minnesota Impressionists*, 17.

sj Falk and Lewis, 3494.

s⁴ *Ibid.*, 3546; Bertha C. Heilbron, "Edwin Whitefield, Settler's Artist," *Minnesota History* 40 (1966): 62-77.

ss Minnesota Historical Society, *Visual Images Resources*, Donald Taylor.

Chapter 4

EXHIBITION CHECK LIST, TEXT PANELS AND LABELS

The contents of this chapter includes a list of all the art work and the three-dimensional objects included in *An Artist's Paradise*, as well a copies of the text panels and labels used in the exhibition. The order in which this chapter is presented is an approximation of how the objects were arranged in galleries. It is not possible to recreate the exact order placement of objects in the exhibition in print, because there is no way to account for the groupings and stacking that occurred on the gallery walls. Chronological order in this chapter is the same as presented in the galleries.

The wording on all text panels and labels are not necessarily mine. I submitted the initial copy for inclusion on the text panels and labels based on my research, the final wording, however, was subject to editorial review at the Minnesota Museum of American Art.

Introductory Text Panel

AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA LANDSCAPES 1840 - 1940

We must leave thee, Paradise. Good-bye. Minnesota, Fair land of lake and prairie. of pleasant wood and rolling waur.

Call Jf.1mJJ1on, from her w?Jwie Catherl'fl Hbot, 1861*

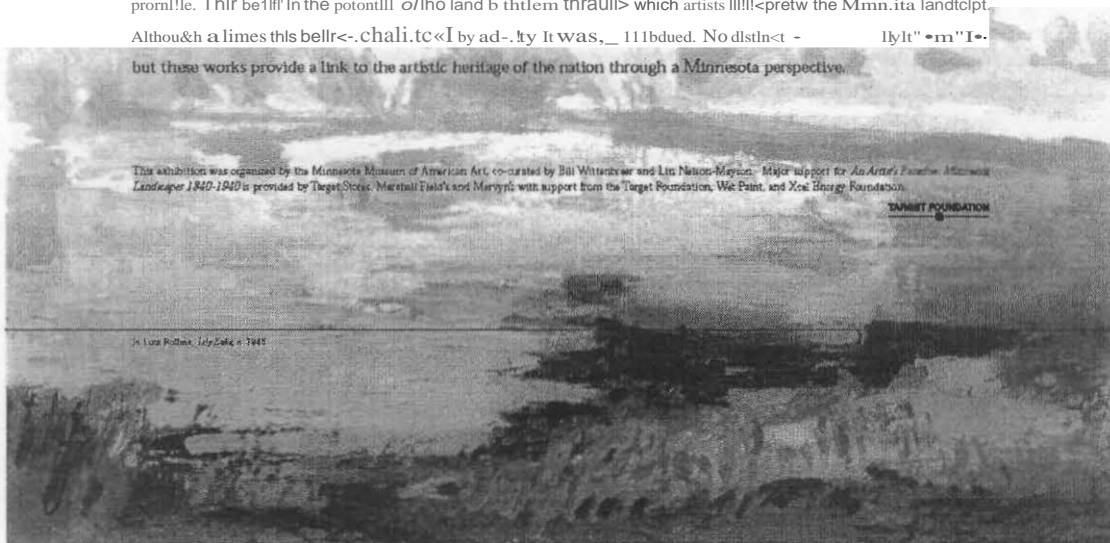
The landscapes in this exhibition are 100 years of Minnesota history, but they are more than that. They represent both artistic interpretations of the land and influences that have shaped the state. From the earliest settlement, Minnesota was closely tied to the mythology of the West, "Cardon d'E-t-n" or a "Paradise on Earth." The West was filled with the promise of unlimited opportunity. For Minnesota, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha* infused the myth with nineteenth-century romanticism, linking the promise of the land to a trust in divine providence.

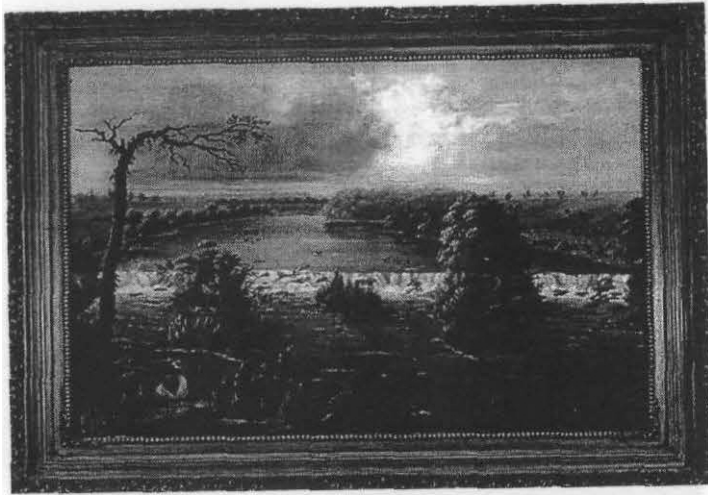
Early artists who came to Minnesota worked primarily in the French-Canadian or the Hudson River style, emphasizing the grandeur of the land. The United States adopted the style of the European Modernism. Throughout this period, the artist's attitude toward the land... of promise. The belief in the potential of the land brought forth which artists interpreted the Minnesota landscape. Although a times this belief was... but these works provide a link to the artistic heritage of the nation through a Minnesota perspective.

This exhibition was organized by the Minnesota Museum of American Art, co-organized by Bill Witzke and Lin Nelson-Meyson. Major support for *An Artist's Paradise: Minnesota Landscapes 1840-1940* is provided by Target Stores, Marshall Field's and Macy's, with support from the Target Foundation, We Paint, and Xcel Energy Foundation.

TARGET FOUNDATION

In Luce Rollins, 1840-1940





Saint Anthony Falls

Painted in 1848

Henry Lewis

Born 1819, Newport or Scarborough, England; died 1904, Diisseldorf, Germany

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Gift of Mrs. M.O. Morrill

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

This painting may have been a study for Henry Lewis' panorama of the Mississippi River. Lewis' panorama was intended to be viewed one scene at a time, but as 1,325 feet of painted canvas was unrolled, the viewer obviously enjoyed a sense of motion.

Henry Lewis' panorama was first shown in St. Louis in 1849 with an admission price of fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children. The viewing of the panorama lasted nearly two hours. Lewis toured his panorama throughout the United States and Europe.

View of the Falls of Saint Anthony

Printed in the 1870s

Hermann J. Meyer, Publisher

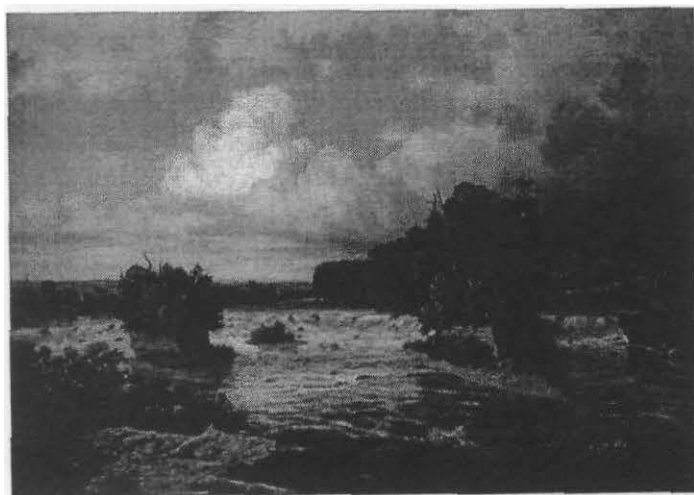
Etching

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Gift of Mary H. Taylor, 1925

This print of St. Anthony Falls is an example of prints depicting "natural wonders" and other landscape scenes popular in the 19th century.

Hermann J. Meyer was known for his small, well executed prints of towns and other scenes. Meyer also published a world travel book in 1852-1853 titled Meyer's *Universum: Views of the Most Remarkable Places and Objects of All Countries, engraved in Steel by Distinguished Artists, with Descriptive and Historical Text.*



Saint Anthony Falls as it Appeared in 1848

Painted in 1855

Henry Lewis

Born 1819, Newport or Scarborough, England; died 1904, Diisseldorf, Germany

Oil on canvas

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts Gift of E.C. Gale

Reprinted with permission of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Although completed in 1855, this painting depicts St. Anthony Falls as it appeared in 1848. Henry Lewis visited Minnesota in 1848 and sketched the Falls in addition to several other scenes of the Mississippi River. This idyllic work contains the classic elements of "the picturesque." St. Anthony Falls represents the power of nature. The divinity within nature is represented by Spirit Island (on the left). The Native American represents man's harmonious relationship with nature.

Minnesota Prairie

Painted from 1858-1859

Thomas P. Rossiter

Born 1818, New Haven, CT; died 1871, Cold Spring, NY

Oil on canvas

Collection Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Gift of Daniel S. Feidt

This painting shows the promise of the new state of Minnesota. The horizon seems endless and a gentle, golden light warmly shines on the new farm carved out of the prairie.

Thomas P. Rossiter primarily painted portraits and historical subjects, and occasionally, landscapes. He traveled throughout Europe with nationally known American landscape painters John F. Kensett and Asher B. Durand. He may have come to Minnesota at the suggestion of John F. Kensett, who had earlier painted in Minnesota.

**Minnesota Harvest Field**

Painted in 1877

Joseph Rusting Meeker

Born 1827, Newark NJ; died 1889, St. Louis, MO

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Carl A. Weyerhauser

Charitable Trust purchase

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

This painting depicts a harvest field near Lake Pepin, in southeastern Minnesota. Following an artistic convention common at the time, Joseph Rusling Meeker placed himself in the painting, he is the figure carrying the easel in the lower left of the painting.

Meeker was an artist who specialized in painting pale lighted scenes of the bayous of the Lower Mississippi River. In contrast to these murky, steamy images, Meeker's paintings of Minnesota were much brighter. He visited Minnesota four times between 1870 and 1880.

Government Sawmill and Flour Mill on the Mississippi

Painted in about 1857

Barton S. Hays

Born 1826, Greenville, OH; died 1914, Minneapolis, MN

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

Barton S. Hays painted this view of early construction at St. Anthony Falls based on a photograph by Benjamin Franklin Upton. The growth of the city is evident in the human made structures surrounding the falls: a government saw mill, a flour mill and Cheever's Tower (in the distant background). Spirit Island is depicted on the left.

Barton S. Hays was a portrait painter and teacher in Ohio and Indiana. William Merritt Chase, a noted American Impressionist, was his student. Hays moved to Minneapolis in 1882 and painted mostly still life, his best known artistic subject.



Shakopee, Minnesota

Painted in 1858

Edwin Whitefield

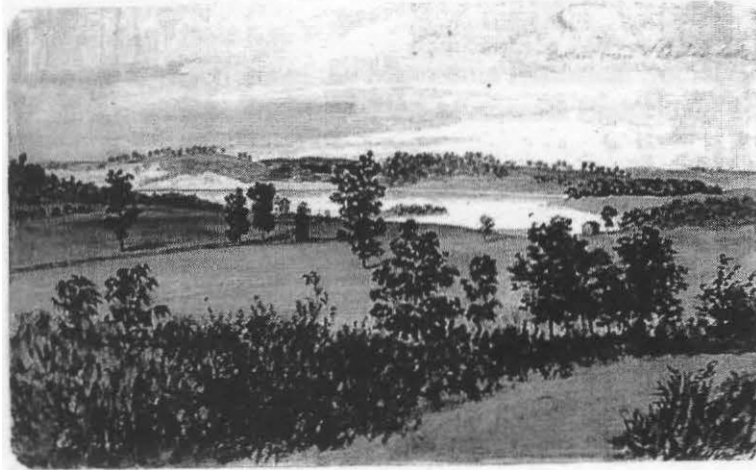
Born 1816; died 1892

Watercolor

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

Edwin Whitefield was an artist and real estate promoter. He used his artistic talents to depict the ease and quality of life made possible by settling on the land. He referred to the Minnesota River Valley as the "Land of Promise." He called the Sauk River Valley, in particular the area near Fairy Lake, a "Farmer's Paradise." Whether Whitefield had success in selling his town sites can only be guessed, but he was an early spokesman for Minnesota's quality of life.



Cedar Lake

Painted around 1856-59

Edwin Whitefield

Born 1816; died 1892

Watercolor

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society, Gift of Wilfred J. Whitefield



In the Big Woods

Painted around 1856-59

Edwin Whitefield

Born 1816, died 1892

Watercolor

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

Barn Bluff at Red Wing

Painted in 1866

Alfred Thompson Bricher

Born 1837, Portsmouth, NH;

Died 1908, New Dorp, Staten Island, NY

Oil on canvas

Collection Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Museum purchase

Alfred Thompson Bricher came to Minnesota under the spell of the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*. Like many artists of his generation, he sought the ideal relationship between humans and nature, an ethos called "the picturesque." This painting is one of the few works that remains from his trip to Minnesota in 1866.

Bricher studied at the Lowell Institute in Boston and settled in New York. He exhibited frequently at the Boston Athenaeum and the National Academy of Design. He is primarily known for his paintings of the New England Coast.



Maiden's Rock, Lake Pepin

Painted in 1862

Robert S. Duncanson
 Born approx. 1817-1822, Seneca County, NY;
 Died 1872, Detroit, MI

Oil on canvas
 Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts
 Gift of William Macbeth, Inc.
 Reprinted with permission of the Mead Art Museum

This painting depicts one of the several sites Robert S. Duncanson painted on his trip to Minnesota in 1862. Scenes of the Mississippi River were rapidly becoming popular with artists. The choppy water in the foreground offsets the otherwise calmness evident in this work. Joseph D. Ketner, a recent biographer of Duncanson, proposes the choppy water reflects the artist's own unrest as a free person of color during the Civil War.

Sunset Moon Rise, Lake Pepin

Painted in 1873

Joseph Rusling Meeker
 Born 1827, Newark, NJ; died 1898, St. Louis MO

Oil on Canvas
 Collection of Minnesota Museum of American Art Acquisition Fund Purchase

Mark Twain described Lake Pepin in Minnesota, then an enormously popular tourist attraction, as the grandest conception of nature's work. Scenes of the Upper Mississippi were in great demand.

Joseph Rusling Meeker, a painter from St. Louis, Missouri, visited Minnesota to paint scenes of the Upper Mississippi for his southern clients. He was often the guest of General Garrad, proprietor of the popular tourist hotel, the Lakeside, in Frontenac, Minnesota. Meeker was frequently seen painting from a barge on Lake Pepin.

Minneapolis from University of Minnesota Campus

Painted in 1888

Alexis Fournier
 Born 1865, St Paul, MN; died 1948, Lackawanna, NY

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis

Gift of Daniel S. Feidt

This view of Minneapolis is one of many Twin Cities scenes that Fournier completed in 1888. Collectively, these paintings of scenes of the area document the progress of our proud growing communities.

In 1883, Mark Twain wrote of the Twin Cities, "The center of population at the head of the Mississippi navigation will begin a rivalry as to numbers, with that center of population at the foot of it New Orleans."

Old Row at Fort Snelling

Painted in 1888

Alexis Fournier

Born 1865, St. Paul, MN; died 1948, Lackawanna, NY

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

In 1888, Fort Snelling was a supply base for the Dakota Division of the U.S. Army. This painting is one of many scenes of Minneapolis and St. Paul Alexis Fournier completed in 1888. He displayed these paintings in the window of his studio on Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis.

Art collector and railroad baron James J. Hill admired Fournier's work. Hill became one of Fournier's first patrons and financed Fournier's first trips to study art in France.



Saint Paul from Pig's Eye

Painted in 1888

James Larpeur

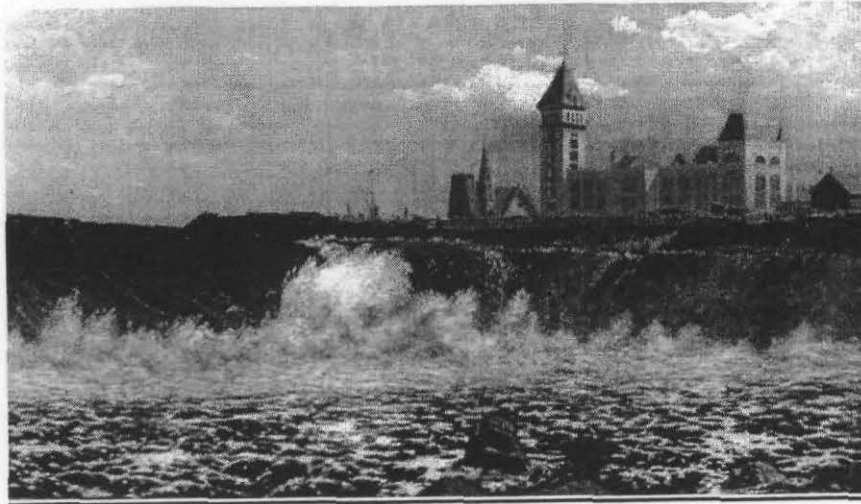
Born 1847, died 1915

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Gift of the family of Dr. Harry B. Bernard Zimmerman and Dr. Bernard Zimmerman through Mrs. Sally Minard

The sky and the quiet feeling of this painting suggest a peaceful coexistence between nature and the city of St. Paul. The city is located in the distance (left) and does not appear to threaten the pastoral countryside.

James Larpeur was a St. Paul native who studied in Paris in 1867. He returned to St. Paul and specialized in European style landscapes, called pastorals, featuring groups of sheep, cows, or horses.



Saint Anthony Falls and the Minneapolis Exposition Hall

Painted in 1890

Alexis Fournier

Born 1865, St Paul, MN; died 1948, Lackawanna, NY

Oil on canvas

From the Collection of the Minnesota Museum of American

This painting combines nature, commerce, and religion in a dramatic composition. Nature is revealed in the power of the Mississippi River. The mighty river dwarfs the buildings and figures. The Minneapolis Exposition Hall (since destroyed) served as a center of commerce. A church spire (present day Our Lady of Lourdes) directs the viewer's attention to the dramatic sky.

Alexis Fournier was best known for his paintings of landscapes in various seasons and his distinctive skies.

Minnehaha Falls Text Panel and Labels

AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA LANDSCAPES 1840 - 1940

MINNEHAHA FALLS

*In the land of the Dacotab.s, Where the Falls of Minnehaha Flash...
From the waterfall he named hu, Minnehaha, Lauglllog Water.*

M.Jl)' &tm In J8f9

When Fort Snelling was built in 1819, few would have predicted that Brown's Falls would fall on the north side of the falls. In 1849, a woman named Minnehaha wrote a poem to describe the falls. The poem was written in Dakota and translated into English by her husband. The poem is a beautiful description of the falls and the surrounding area.

Minnehaha Falls is a beautiful sight. It is a waterfall that falls about 60 feet. The water is very clear and the surrounding area is very beautiful. The falls are a popular destination for tourists and locals alike. The falls are a beautiful sight and a great place to visit.

Minnehaha Falls is a beautiful sight. It is a waterfall that falls about 60 feet. The water is very clear and the surrounding area is very beautiful. The falls are a popular destination for tourists and locals alike. The falls are a beautiful sight and a great place to visit.

We went to the Falls (Minnehaha) that fall about 60 feet, they are so id to equal Niagara.

Mar 1, 1855 (J. T. Wright)





Little Falls

Drawn in 1849

Adolf Hoeffler

Born 1825; died 1898

Graphite

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

This 1849 sketch of Minnehaha Falls is one of the earliest known drawings of the area. However, with the 1855 publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*, Minnehaha Falls became one of the most popular natural features in the United States.

Adolf Hoeffler immigrated to New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1848. He was fascinated with the scenery of the Mississippi River. He made a sketching trip to Minnesota in 1849 and was stirred by its beauty.

Minnehaha Falls

Painted in 1870

Jerome B. Thompson

Born 1814, Middleboro, MA; died 1886, Glen Gardner, NJ

Oil on canvas

Collection of Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota,

Minneapolis

Gift of Daniel S. Feidt

Rena Coen, a noted scholar of Minnesota art, considered this painting of Minnehaha Falls to be an early example of Impressionism because of the glistening sunlight on the Falls.

Jerome B. Thompson may have been the first professional artist to live in Minnesota. Thompson worked primarily as a landscape painter in New York. He must have been familiar with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's popular poem, *The Song of Hiawatha*, because he titled one of his paintings *Hiawatha's Journey*.

Minnehaha Falls

Painted in 1862

Robert S. Duncanson

Born sometime between 1817-1822, Seneca County, NY.

Died 1872, Detroit, MI

Oil on canvas

Howard University Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

In 1862, Robert S. Duncanson received two commissions to paint Minnehaha Falls as a result of the publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *The Song of Hiawatha*. Viewers of the time would have recognized the Indian woman as Minnehaha, Hiawatha's bride.

Robert S. Duncanson was perhaps the most accomplished African American artist in the United States from 1850-1860. *The Daily Cincinnati Gazette* referred to him as the best landscape painter in the West. He was largely self-taught and lived primarily in Cincinnati.

Minnehaha Falls

Painted in 1886

Albert Bierstadt

Born 1830, Solingen, Prussia, immigrated to the U.S 1832; died 1902, New York City

Oil on canvas on wood panel

Collection Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Gift of one Walker

This intimate portrayal of Minnehaha Falls was a gift to Archie Walker, son of Minneapolis lumberman and art collector, T.B. Walker. Archie is the figure with the straw hat.

Albert Bierstadt is primarily known for his large grandiose paintings of the American West. In 1886, he exhibited a large number of his paintings at the Minneapolis Industrial Exposition.

In addition to the artwork contained in the Minnehaha section of *An Artist's Paradise*, there is a large display case containing the following items pertaining to Minnehaha Falls.

Souvenir Plate of Minnehaha Falls
Made in the 1920s

Made by Frank Beardmore and Co. for the George H. Bowman Co., Cleveland and New York

China with blue and white transfer
Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

Souvenir Vase

Depicts various Minneapolis sites, including Fort Snelling, Pillsbury Hall at the University of Minnesota, Minnehaha Falls, City Hall, and St. Anthony Falls
Made in the 1920s

Made in Germany for the Donaldson Co. Potmetal
Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

Demitasse Cup and Saucer with image of Minnehaha Falls

Made around 1910

Made in Germany

Gold plated china, color decal
Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

Souvenir Plate with image of Minnehaha Falls

Made in the 1930s

Made in Germany for "Lucky Buck Studios" N.H.T. Co.

Hand painted china plate

Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

Souvenir Plate

Depicts Minneapolis sites, including the Public Library, University of Minnesota, Mississippi River, West Hotel, Fort Snelling, Viaduct and Flour Mills, and Minnehaha Falls

Made in the 1920s

Made for the New England Furniture and Carpet Co. by the Rowland and Marsellus Co., Staffordshire, England

Blue and white china plate with transfer images

Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

Lavered Sand Sculpture

Made in the 1880s

Maker unknown

Created using sand specimens from the Minnehaha Falls area. The wood pedestal has a written proverb.

Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

Three Legged Tilt Top Table depicting Minnehaha Falls

Made around 1880

Maker unknown

Papier Mache, wood, polychrome and set with

Mother of pearl

Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

The Song of Hiawatha

Published in 1906

Author, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Illustrator, Harrison Fisher

Decorations by E. Stetson Crawford

Publisher, the Bobbs-Merril Company, Indianapolis, Private Collection

Heart Shaped Bookmark, with Minnehaha Falls

Date made unknown

Maker unknown

Stamped metal with offset lithograph and tassel

Collection of Sunny Wore!

Medal with Image of Minnehaha Falls

Made in 1912

Made by the Wendall Greenwood Co. , Minneapolis

Cast metal

Collection of Sunny Wore!

Minnehaha Falls Refrigerator Magnet

Made in 2002

Gauss

Made from vintage postcard, Minnehaha Falls

Private Collection

Pen with Image of Minnehaha Falls

Date made unknown

Made by National Design Company, USA

Private Collection

Vintage Postcards of Minnehaha Falls
Made around 1900-1940

Various makers

Offset lithograph
Collection of Lora Bloom

Vintage Postcards of Minnehaha Falls
Made around 1900-1940

Various makers

Offset lithograph
Collection of Lora Bloom

1890-1920 Text Panel and Labels

AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA LANDSCAPES 1840 - 1940

1890-1920

The statistics of the resources and possibilities, the growth and progress of Minnesota, reads like a fairy tale.

Commissioner of the State, Report to the Legislature, 1893

In 1890 Minnesota was full of men and women with rapidly growing economy and population. No longer did the wilderness hold back the farmer. The landscape re-created by the State and the farmer operated over 15 million acres now farmed. The lumber industry, Saint Paul and Minneapolis recognized the unequal competition of the lumbering West; hence the "Minneapolis Convention" of 1893. Colorado and Idaho in Chicago to celebrate their settlement.

Minnesota's artistic development followed the lead of the State, and Saint Cloud, had with it the Ancestral Pueblo, the artist in the State and Minneapolis. Private galleries, the collection by the Minnesota Society, T. B. V. and J. M. J. Hill. In turn, the collection of the Minnesota Society, the collection of the Minnesota Society, the collection of the Minnesota Society.

A. F. produced in the collection of the Minnesota Society, the collection of the Minnesota Society, the collection of the Minnesota Society, the collection of the Minnesota Society, the collection of the Minnesota Society.

And to make this earthly paradise complete and the fit home of a thrifty and hardy race, it is possessed and surrounded with an atmosphere pure, health-breeding and work inspiring...

Governor Knute Nelson, Colombian Exposition, 1893





Landscape-Hills

Painted in 1890

Anton Gag

Born 1859 Walk, Bohemia; died 1908, New Ulm, MN

Oil on board

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

These two landscapes near New Ulm, Minnesota, demonstrate Anton Gag's passion for his natural surroundings. The bright colors and quick brush strokes give the impression that Gag painted these scenes almost spontaneously.

Anton Gag emigrated from German Bohemia to St. Paul with his family. The Gag family later moved to New Ulm. In New Ulm, Anton Gag worked as a painter, church decorator, and photographer. He also tried to establish an art school. Anton's daughter, Wanda Gag, became famous as an author and illustrator of children's books, most notably *Millions of Cats*.

Fishin2 on Minnehaha Creek

Painted about 1890

Barton S. Hays

Born 1826 Greenville, OH; died 1914, Minneapolis, MN

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

The panoramic perspective and stillness of this scene depict a boy fishing on Minnehaha Creek and lend a snapshot quality to this painting. Everything seems frozen in time, waiting for something to happen.

Like artist Henry Lewis, Barton S. Hays also painted panoramas. A panorama was a large painted canvas that was unrolled before spectators and made to pass before them thus displaying various parts in succession. The panorama was the "invention picture" of the 19th century. Hays painted two panoramas.



Farm Scene
Painted in 1890

Anton Gag
Born 1859, Walle, Bohemia; died 1908

Oil on board
From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society
Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

Artist's Paradise
Painted in about 1890

Jonas Holland Howe
Born 1821 MA; died 1898

Oil on canvas
Collection of the Hennepin History Museum

This portrayal of an artist contemplating the beauty of his surroundings might be the artist himself. The landscape is an idealized Minnesota scene. Jonas Howe's portrayal of himself is a classic artistic convention, and you will see it used in several other works in this exhibition.

Jonas Howe came to Minnesota in 1854 and held several political offices, including school board member in Plymouth and state legislator. He was instrumental in founding the School for the Deaf in Faribault, Minnesota.

Tornado Over St. Paul

Painted in 1893

Julius O. Holm

Born 1855 Norway; died 1930

Oil on canvas

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund

Tornado Over St. Paul is painted in the folk tradition. The clarity and focus of this painting reminds the viewer that nature can be destructive as well as nurturing.

We know very little about Julius O. Holm, a Norwegian immigrant. The 1881 Minneapolis City directory lists him as house painter, though he must have had aspirations to be an artist.

Itasca: Origins of the Mississippi

Painted around 1915

Edwin M. Dawes

Born 1872, Boone, Iowa; died 1934, Los Angeles, CA.

Oil on masonite

Collection Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
Museum purchase

The Mississippi River was a popular subject for artists to paint in the later 19th century. Unlike other paintings that depict the industrial development of the Mississippi River, this painting reminds the viewer of the river's natural state.

Edwin M. Dawes was a determined self-taught artist. In 1892, he was living in Minneapolis and working as a sign painter. Dawes was persistent in his efforts to

become an artist. In 1913, he exhibited and won two awards at the Ninth Annual State Arts Society Show.



Cutting Wheat at White Bear

Painted in 1900

Nicholas Brewer

Born 1857, High Forest, MN; died 1949, St Paul, MN

Oil on canvas

From the collection Minnesota Museum of American Art

In 1859, the first shipment of wheat reached Chicago, and by 1880, Minnesota was the flour milling capital of world. Minnesota was home to the Pillsbury Mill, at the time the largest flour mill in the world.

The economic importance of wheat is illustrated in this anecdote. In 1875, Nicholas Brewer's father gave him forty bushels of wheat to finance his art education. Brewer sold the wheat for thirty-four dollars in Rochester and took the train to St. Paul to study art with Henry Koempel. Perhaps Cutting Wheat at White Bear honors this legacy.



Logged Over Hills, North Minnesota

Painted in 1900

Peter F. Lund

Date born, unknown; died 1902

Oil on canvas

From the collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art
Museum Purchase in memory of our friend Miriam Nelson

The inviting sky depicted in this painting is misleading.

A closer look at this landscape of northern Minnesota reveals a logged-over area with a smokestack in the background polluting the sky.

Peter F. Lund painted scenes of the North Shore of Lake Superior. This painting may have been his contribution to the conservation movement that was developing in Minnesota. Lumbering was destroying northern Minnesota, and the first Forest Preserve (later the Chippewa National Forest) was created in 1902.



Saint Paul from Cherokee Heights

Painted in 1915

Alice E. Hugy

Born 1876, Solothum, Switzerland; died 1971, St. Paul, MN

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gareth Hiebert

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

In this painting, the city of St. Paul is depicted as existing in harmony with nature. The clear, bright sky and the Mississippi River in the foreground seem to wrap around and protect the city.

Alice Hugy studied at the St. Paul School of Art

(predecessor to the Minnesota Museum of American Art) and in New York City. She first exhibited at the Minnesota State Fair in 1910. Like many artists of her generation, she was a successful commercial artist and included among her clients Hamms beer and Grain Belt Brewery. She was known, locally, as the "Matriarch" of the arts.

Phalen Park

Date painted unknown

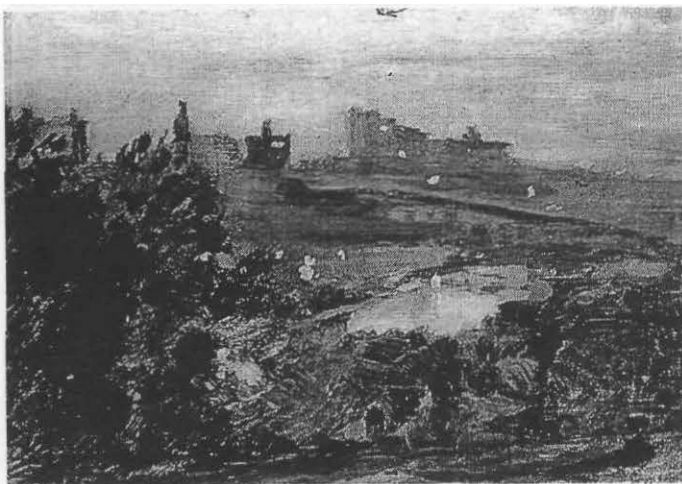
Alice E. Hugy

Born 1876, Solothum, Switzerland; died 1971, St. Paul, MN

Watercolor
 Collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art
 Gift of Mildred and Adele Thomson

Tree branches frame this view of Phalen Park in northeastern St. Paul. Alice Hugy had a deep love for nature. Like the French Impressionists, she used color and broad brush strokes to convey the beauty of nature.

Hugy can also be considered an early environmentalist. The *City* of St. Paul honored her for her efforts to preserve Cherokee Park. Hugy defined art as "the response to the beauty and wonder of the world we live in."



Saint Paul by Night
 Painted in 1922

Arthur Allie
 Born 1872, DePere, WI; died 1953, St. Paul, MN

Oil on canvas
 From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society
 Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

This view of St. Paul from the West Side depicts the High Bridge and the skyline of downtown St. Paul.

Arthur Allie studied in New York with Robert Henri, a renowned American artist and influential teacher. Allie then returned to St. Paul where he lived the rest of his life. Allie is known mostly for his work for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and

Federal Art Projects (FAP). The WPA and FAP tended to favor realism over modernism, which makes this modernist work from Allie's early career so unique.

Post Office Silhouette
Printed around 1910-1912

George Resler
Born 1882, Waseca, MN; died 1954

Etching with plate tone on Japan
Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Gift of Elmer L. and Eleanor J. Andersen

The Federal Post Office (now St. Paul's Landmark Center) is portrayed here as a symbol of government. In this regard, the etching shares a similar theme with *City on the Hill* by Magnus Norstad, also on view. Yet the activity on the Mississippi River with its smokestacks and industrial buildings serves as a counterpoint to the regal Post Office, which emerges almost like a min, out of this environment.

George Resler grew up on the West Side of St. Paul. He received formal art training at the St. Paul School of Art (a forerunner of the Minnesota Museum of American Art) and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Lake Washington
Printed in 1921

George Resler
Born 1882, Waseca, MN; died 1954

Etching
Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Gift of Mrs. George Resler, 1965

Lake Washington (possibly in Wright County, Minnesota) is portrayed here as peaceful and tranquil. Unlike other works on view of this era, George Resler emphasizes the natural beauty of Minnesota.

After attending art school in Chicago, George Resler returned to St. Paul. He became interested in etching, a form of engraving. He produced etchings of local scenes, which became very popular. Soon Resler's etchings gained a national reputation. St. Paul art patrons financed a trip to Europe for Resler to further his education.



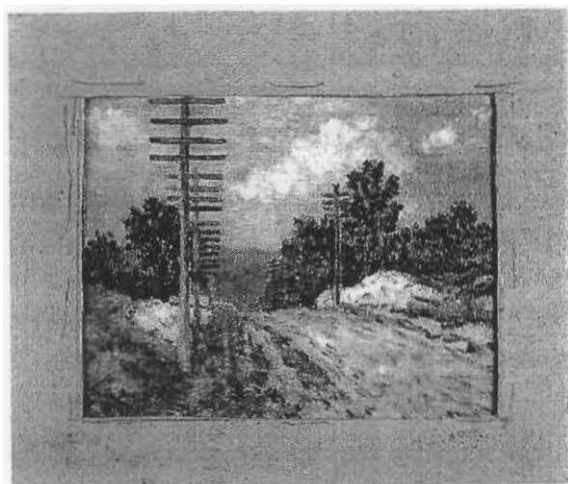
Minnesota Lake Scene
Painted in 1902

Alexis Fournier
Born 1865, St Paul, MN; died 1948, Lackawanna, NY

Oil on canvas
From the collection of Minnesota Museum of American Art

The Minneapolis lakes were becoming a popular place for people to go to relax and escape the heat of the city. Fournier's use of moonlight, reflection, and a dark palette gives this painting the feeling of a warm summer night.

At the time of this painting, Alexis Fournier was the best known artist from Minnesota. He later became the artistic director of Elbert Hubbard's Roycroft Colony in upstate New York and was associated with the Hoosier Impressionists Art Colony of Brown County, Indiana. Even with these various appointments and sabbaticals, Fournier always considered Minnesota his home.



Road with Telegraph Poles

Painted in 1905

Alice Le Duc

Born 1868, Hastings, MN; died 1962, Minneapolis, MN

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

This wistfully lit painting depicts an unidentified rural Minnesota road complete with the poles of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company. Minnesota had a telegraph service as early as 1860, and telephone service by 1879.

Alice LeDue, daughter of Minnesota Civil War General, William LeDue, attended art school briefly in St. Paul. She and her sister Florence formed the Hastings Needlework Company, which sold original needlework patterns designed by Alice and Florence. The business closed in 1922.

Minnehaha Falls from Below

Photographed in 1905

William Henry Jackson

Born 1843, Keeseville, NY; died 1942, NY

Photo chrome

Collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art

Collections Fund Purchase

William Henry Jackson, most famous for his photographs of Yellowstone National Park, joined the Detroit Photographic Company in 1897. This company produced photochromes, a continuous-tone color rendition of a black and white photograph that uses multiple impressions from lithographic stones.

The four photographs shown here were parts of a series of photographs depicting seven Minnesota scenes and sold by the Detroit Photographic Company. These photographs were reproduced as souvenir postcards and sold for one penny each. Such souvenirs and other memorabilia were in great demand by tourists visiting Minnesota.

Saint Paul Minnesota

Photographed in 1898

William Henry Jackson

Born 1843, Keeseville, NY; died 1942, NY

Photo chrome

Collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art Collections Fund Purchase

Duluth from Cascade Park

Photographed in 1902

William Henry Jackson

Born 1843, Keeseville, NY; died 1942, NY

Photo chrome

Collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art Collections Fund Purchase

Old Watch Tower, Fort Snelling Minnesota

Photographed in 1902

William Henry Jackson

Born 1843, Keeseville, NY; died 1942, NY

Photo chrome

Collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art Collections Fund Purchase



City on a Hill
Painted in 1917

Magnus Norstad
Born 1884, Bodo, Norway; died 1962, CA

Oil on canvas
From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society
Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

In *City on a Hill*, Magnus Norstad used a common theme in American intellectual history. Cities in the New World were considered the New Jerusalem, free from all the corruption that plagued cities in older civilizations.

This painting won the silver medal at the Northwestern Artists' Exhibit at the St. Paul Institute in 1917. Norstad left Minnesota in 1920 and moved to Valhalla, New York, and finally California.

1920-1940 Text Panel and Labels

AN ARTIST'S PARADISE: MINNESOTA LANDSCAPES 1840 - 1940

1920-1940

There is no place in America in which it is better to paint than Minnesota.

Dr. Alfred A. Thomsen, 1921

The Depression hit hard. In the North American Midwest, farmers were forced to leave their land as crops dried in the drought. Manufacturing allowed a trickle of income to support labor struggles such as the trucker strike of 1934. Curiously, the art produced by Minnesota artists depicted the beauty of this wonderful and beautiful state.

Prior to the Depression, many artists from the East Coast moved to Minnesota, but had to move to more lucrative markets in the East to survive. With their arrival, the art scene in Minnesota flourished. When the market crashed in 1929, many artists who had moved to Minnesota stayed home.

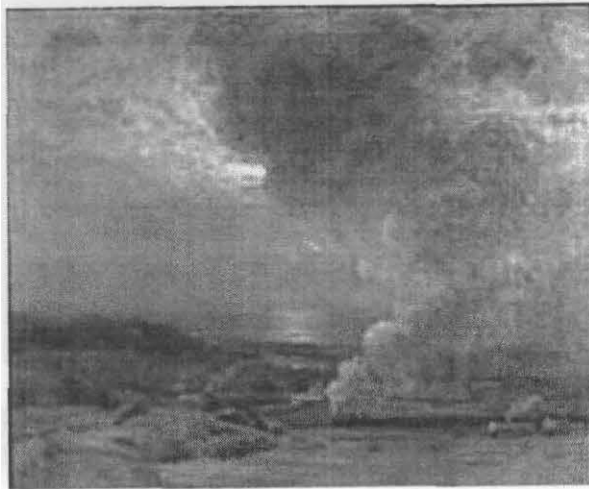
Artists who returned to Minnesota during the Depression found the work community, often they exhibited in the state. They met in places like the Malt's Nimbus Club in St. Louis, technical and support. Painters Dewey Albion and Vernon Booth had become influential in the Midwest art schools or in the Twin Cities. The State fair became the primary venue for the exhibition of new work. The biggest boon to Minnesota was the Ford's program or the New Deal, administered locally by the Art Commission. The program provided jobs for many Minnesota artists.

In the latter part of this period, it was optimistic and hopeful. It could only depict the richness of the land. The artists worked in a style termed "American Scene" painting. It emphasized the beauty of the country with a realistic and usable form. Their paintings reflected the rural and industrial landscape, with shades of modernism. Above all, artists worked with a passion for the subject matter: Minnesota's land and people.

Local artists have only one choice: to depict the scene they were born in and the one they certainly know best.

Edward L. Loran, 1931



**Winter Scene**

Painted in 1920

Nicholas Brewer

Born 1857, High Forest, MN; died 1949, St Paul, MN

Oil on canvas

From the collection of Minnesota Museum of America Art
Collections Fund Purchase

The subject of *Winter Scene* is a crisp cold winter night in Minnesota (probably in southeastern Minnesota). The train, steam, and clouds all appear motionless, almost weighty against the cold blue sky. *Winter Scene* illustrates Minnesota Impressionism at its finest.

Although Nicholas Brewer's first love was landscape painting, he was known primarily as a portrait painter. He painted presidents Grover Cleveland and Franklin Roosevelt. He also painted the official portraits of several Minnesota governors as well as the governors of ten other states.



Untitled (St. Croix River in Winter)

Painted in about 1920

Dewey Albinson

Born 1898, MN; died 1971, Mexico

Oil on canvas

From the collection of Minnesota Museum of American Art

Gift of the Baillon Family Foundation

Dewey Albinson loved to paint the area of the St. Croix with its rushing waters and tall rocky banks.

Albinson studied at the Minneapolis School of Art (forerunner of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design), the New York Art Students League, and also in France. He exhibited at the Independent Salon of Paris in 1920. He returned to Minnesota in 1921 and became an advocate for the natural beauty of the Minnesota land. Albinson wrote, "The Catskills are beautiful but I found the rugged peace and solitude of the Minnesota hills to be more charming."

Winter River (Minnehaha Creek)

Painted in about 1920

Olaf Aalbu Sr.

Born 1878, Broholm, Orland, Sor Trondelag; died 1926

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Vesterheim Norwegian- American Museum, Decorah, IA

Gift of Jeanette Aalbu

Minnehaha Falls became a popular destination for artists and tourists in the 1850s. This painting reflects the continued popularity of Minnehaha Creek and Minnehaha Falls as a popular subject for artists.

Olaf Aalbu, Sr., came to Minneapolis in 1902 to work in his brother's saloon. He studied at the Minneapolis School of Art (a forerunner of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design) with Alexander Masley. Aalbu exhibited at the Minnesota State Fair, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and the Norwegian Club in Chicago. During the Great Depression, Aalbu worked for the Works Progress Administration-Federal Art Projects (WPA-FAP) in Minneapolis with artists Elov Wedin and Erle Loran whose work also appears in this exhibition.

#22 Birches

Painted in the 1920s

Knute Heldner

Born 1877, Svelend Province, Sweden; died 1953

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

This painting of the Lake Superior shoreline combines two of Heldner's favorite subjects: birch trees and Lake Superior.

After serving in the Swedish Navy, Knute Heldner immigrated to Duluth, Minnesota, at the age of twenty-three. His goal was to become a painter. In 1920, he won first prize at the Minnesota State Fair art exhibit. The Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C., both own works by Heldner.



Indian Camp, Leech Lake Reservation

Painted in 1923

Cameron Booth

Born 1892, Erie, PA; died 1980, Minneapolis, MN

Oil on canvas

From the collection of Minnesota Museum of American Art

Gift of John E. Larkin, Jr.

This work reflects Cameron Booth's strong interest in the Ojibwe people of Minnesota. After teaching only one year at the Minneapolis School of Art (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design), he took a leave of absence to live on the Leech Lake Reservation near Onigum, Minnesota.

Booth wrote of Minnesota, "And life is a little more leisurely here; the economic struggle is less severe and there is more time for contemplation." He preferred Minnesota to Chicago and Manhattan.

Tillers

Painted in 1924

Cameron Booth

Born 1892, Erie, PA; died 1980, Minneapolis, MN

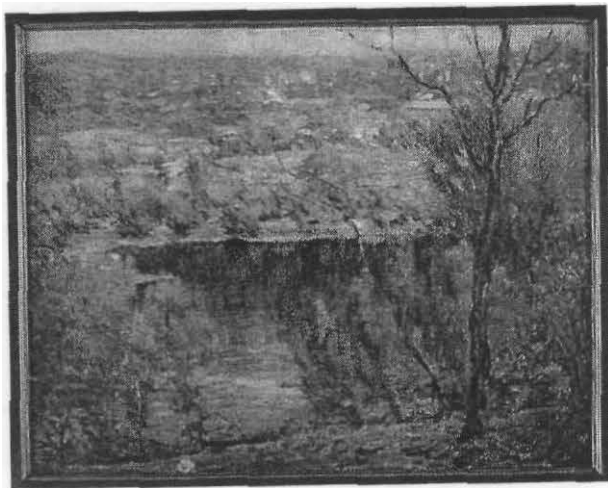
Oil on canvas

Collection of Minnesota Museum of American Art

Museum Purchase

This painting depicts Czech raspberry farmers in the area now known as Hopkins, Minnesota. Cameron Booth uses bright colors and monumental forms to impart dignity and beauty to this farming scene.

Cameron Booth graduated from high school in Moorhead, Minnesota. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and also in France. He returned to Minnesota to teach at the Minneapolis School of Art (forerunner of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design). In 1929, he began teaching at the St. Paul School of Art (predecessor to the Minnesota Museum of American Art), becoming director in 1931.



Minneapolis from Cedar Lake

Painted in 1920

Carl Wendell Rawson

Born 1884, Van Meter IA; died 1970, Minneapolis, MN

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

Due to the high horizon line, the viewer sees both Cedar Lake (in the Minneapolis chain of lakes) and the City of Minneapolis. Like Alice Hugsy's *St. Paul from Cherokee Heights*, also on view in this exhibition, Carl Rawson shows the city completely surrounded by nature.

Rawson briefly worked for the *Minneapolis Tribune* newspaper as a cartoonist, but quit in 1915 to devote his efforts to painting. He retired to his home in the Kenwood neighborhood of Minneapolis.

Untitled Qandscape)

Painted about 1935

Arnold N. Klagstad

Born 1898, Marinette, WI; died 1954

Oil on canvas

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Arnold Klagstad's depiction of this woodwork mill recalls Peter Lund's *Logged Over Hills*, North Minnesota, also on view. Here the choice of gray colors in combination with the smokestack and shabby buildings suggest an uneasy alliance of natural resources and developing industry.

Arnold Klagstad was the son of August Klagstad, a famous Norwegian-American altar painter. Arnold Klagstad studied at the Minneapolis School of Art (today's Minneapolis College of Art and Design) and the Fountainbleau School of Art in France (the famous art colony of the 19th century Barbizon painters). He worked and exhibited locally at the State Fair and other venues. In 1940, the Metropolitan Museum in New York purchased its first artwork by a Minneapolis painter, a work by Arnold Klagstad.

Minnesota Farm

Painted in 1935

B. J. O. Nordfeldt

Born 1878, Tullstrop, Sweden; died 1955, Mexico

Oil on canvas

Augsburg College Permanent Collection

B. J. O. Nordfeldt and fellow Minnesota painter Dewey Albinson would frequently take road trips into the Minnesota countryside looking for possible subjects for their paintings. Unfortunately, they often did not record the location of where they painted, so the whereabouts of this farm is unknown.

B. J. O. Nordfeldt came to Minnesota to teach painting at the Minneapolis School of Art (the current Minneapolis College of Art and Design) in 1933. While in Minnesota during the 1930's, Nordfeldt created at least fifty paintings, of which about twenty survive today. Nordfeldt enjoyed a reputation on par with American Modernist painters Marsden Hartley and John Marin.

Minneapolis (Skaters)

Date printed unknown

BJO. Nordfeldt

Born 1878 Tullstrop, Sweden; died 1955 Mexico

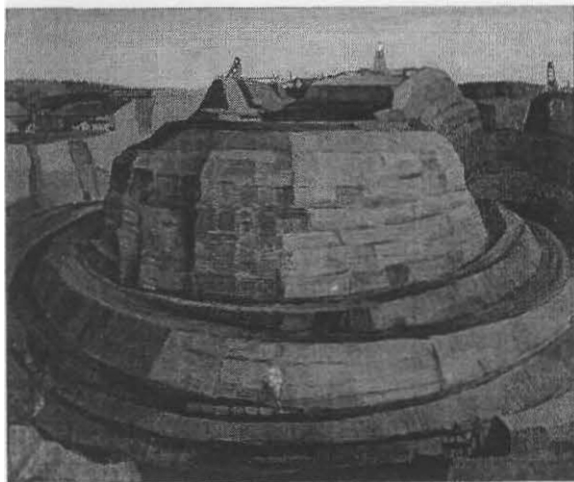
Lithograph

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Gift of Mrs. BJO. Nordfeldt

This portrayal of people enjoying an evening of ice skating is a good example of BJO. Nordfeldt's philosophy of what a picture should do. "Pictures are like poems. A good poem does not tell a story; it contains beauty of rhythm."

Unlike many painters of the 1930s, Nordfeldt was not concerned with Social Realism. Rather than present heroic images of the working class, he preferred painting beautiful images.

**Franklin Mine**

Painted in 1932

Dewey Albinson

Born 1898, MN; died 1971, Mexico

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

Franklin Mine is located near Missabe Mountain in St. Louis County, Minnesota. Rather than showing the land as "Paradise" (a convention or attitude prominent among

19th century landscape painters), here, the land is treated as formal volumes and blocks of muted colors. This stylistic treatment reflects Dewey Albinson's interest in Modernism but perhaps downplays the subject of the painting—the land as a material and economic resource, the land as excavation. Such imagery of the land was sometimes referred to as "the Machine in the Garden."

During the 1930s, Albinson served as the Minnesota State Director of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Art Centers and was president of the Minnesota State Arts Association. Even with these administrative duties, he continued to find time to paint the Minnesota scene.



Winter Sunset

Painted in 1928

Clement Haupers

Born 1900, St. Paul, MN; died 1982, St. Paul, MN

Oil on canvas

From the collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art

Gift of Mrs. Ruth Alice Smith

This winter scene could possibly be of the cabin owned by Clement Haupers and Minnesota artist Clara Mairs on the Kettle River in northern Minnesota.



Spring in the Garden

Printed in the 1930s

Wanda Gag

Born 1893, New Ulm, Minnesota; died 1946, New York, NY

Lithograph

Collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art

Dr. Wolfgang Zeman Fund Purchase



Spring on the Hillside

Printed in 1935

Wanda Gag

Born 1893, New Ulm, Minnesota; died 1946, New York, NY

Print

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

These imaginary landscapes were based on the surrounding countryside of Wanda Gag's hometown, New Uhn, Minnesota. Though Gag left Minnesota in 1917 for New York City, she returned to Minnesota frequently and always remembered her home fondly.

Wanda Gag, daughter of artist Anton Gag, won awards for her prints throughout the 1930s and 1940s. She was also an author and illustrator of children's books. Her most famous children's book is *Millions of Cats*, published in 1928.

Tree Forms

Date painted unknown

Wanda Gag

Born 1893, New Ulm, MN; died 1946, New York City

Watercolor on sandpaper

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Bequest of the Estate of Wanda Gag

These writhing and wiggling trees are full of energy. Wanda Gag felt that the landscape was an energizing force. She felt the countryside surrounding New Ulm reinvigorated her artistic self.

Wanda Gag made extensive use of sandpaper as medium for her art. She liked the way the texture of the paper enhanced her drawings and added sparkle to her watercolors. She probably was the only artist at the time to use sandpaper.

Minneapolis (Skaters)

Date printed unknown

B. J. O. Nordfeldt

Born 1878, Tullstrop, Sweden; died 1955, Mexico

Lithograph

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Gift of Mrs. B. J. O. Nordfeldt

This portrayal of people enjoying an evening of ice skating is a good example of B. J. I. Nordfeldt's philosophy of what a picture should do. "Pictures are like poems. A good poem does not tell a story; it contains beauty of rhythm."

Unlike many painters of the 1930s, Nordfeldt was not concerned with Social Realism. Rather than present heroic images of the working class, he preferred painting beautiful images.

Peaceful Valley

Date printed unknown

Lowell Bobletter

Born 1902, New Ulm, MN; died 1973, St. Paul, MN

Drypoint

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

This peaceful scene depicts several skaters enjoying a pleasant winter night in the Minnesota countryside.

Lowell Bobletter studied at the St. Paul School of Art (predecessor to the Minnesota Museum of American Art) and privately with Minnesota artists George Resler and Cameron Booth. Bobletter was director of the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art, superintendent of the Minnesota State Fair Art Show, and chairman of the art department at Hamline University.

Willows on Lake of the Isles

Printed in 1924

Gustav Fredrick Goetsch

Born 1877, Gaylord, MN; died 1934, St. Louis, MO

Etching

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Gift of Friends of Art in Minneapolis

Unlike some other works in this exhibition where nature and the city are depicted together, here the artist gives no hint that Lake of the Isles is located within a large city.

Gustav Frederick Goetsch studied at the Minneapolis School of Art (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design), the New York School of Art, and the Academie Julian in Paris. He exhibited at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, the St. Paul Institute (the current Minnesota Museum of American Art), and the Minnesota

State Fair. He taught drawing and printmaking at several art schools, including The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

Cows Paradise

Date printed unknown

Clara Mairs

Born 1878, Hastings, MN; died 1963, St. Paul, MN

Etching

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Life could not be much better for these Minnesota cows. The cows in the center of the print appear to rest on a large pillow, and the other cows seem to mill about in great comfort.

Clara Mairs was an early leader amongst Minnesota artists. Many artists would gather at the old St. Paul Auditorium for meetings of the Nimbus Club, a club organized by Mairs for the purposes of sketching, socializing, and discussion

Pleasant Valley

Printed in the 1930s

Alexander Masley

Born 1903 Akeley, MN

Wood engraving

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Gift of Miss Perrie Jones

This hopeful piece completed during the Depression shows a prosperous community. Men and women are working, the buildings are in good repair, the crops are growing, and the sun is starting to shine through as if to cancel out the hard times.

Alexander Masley attended the Minneapolis School of Art (currently the Minneapolis College of Art and Design), and Cameron Booth was one of his teachers. Masley also exhibited at the Minnesota State Fair.

Boating on the Mississippi. Below Fort Snelling

Painted in the 1920s

Alexis Fournier

Born 1865, St. Paul, MN; died 1948, Lackawanna, NY

Oil on canvas

Private Collection

The placement of Fort Snelling in the background suggests the importance of Fort Snelling had diminished. The fort's location on the Mississippi River originally made it important for military purposes. By the time of this painting, Fort Snelling had become a recreation area.

In the 1920s, Alexis Fournier began to spend time with the Hoosier's Impressionists art colony of Brown County, Indiana. The rural landscape, color, and light of Brown County attracted a group of painters who favored the Impressionistic style.



Hill and Fields

Painted in 1931

Erle Loran

Born 1905, Minneapolis; died 1999

Oil on canvas

From the collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art
Museum Purchase

The portrayal of the lush Minnesota countryside reflects Erle Loran's belief that painting the "American scene is the natural thing to do... and not merely falling in line with the current trend."

Loran attended the Minneapolis School of Art (a forerunner of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design) and taught art for various Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects in Minnesota. Based on a recommendation by fellow Minnesota artist and teacher Cameron Booth, Loran accepted a teaching position at the University of California-Berkeley. He remained at Berkeley and authored a popular textbook, *Cezanne's Composition*.



Cornstalks

Painted in 1933

Emile Hastings

Born 1892; died 1984

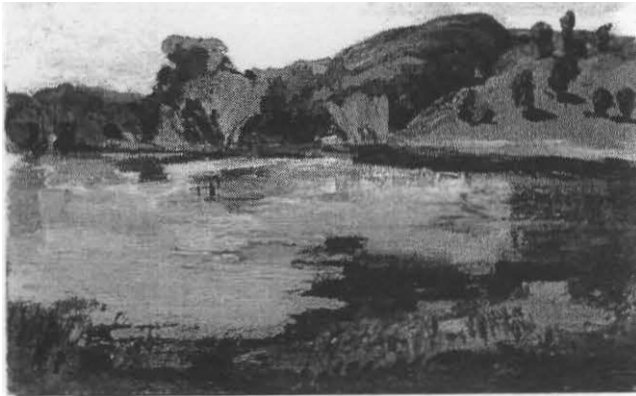
Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

This unidentified Minnesota field is bathed in golden light and promises a bountiful harvest. The work is very similar in style to Erle Loran's *Hill and Fields*, also in this exhibition.

Emile Hastings studied at the San Francisco Art Institute. He had a dual career in music and art. Hastings came to Minneapolis in 1932 and worked as a commercial artist. A Chicago art critic wrote that Hastings' artwork belonged on a list of candidates for the "classification of remarkable."



Lily Lake

Painted about 1945

Josephine Lutz Rollins

Born 1896, Sherburn, MN; died 1989

Oil on canvas

From the collection of the Minnesota Museum of American Art

Cornelia Morgan Memorial Fund Purchase

This Stillwater area lake was named Lily Lake because of the large number of water lilies growing there.

Josephine Lutz Rollins studied art at the University of Minnesota and with Minnesota artist Cameron Booth at the Minneapolis School of Art (the current Minneapolis College of Art and Design). She founded an art colony in Stillwater and the West Lake Gallery, a Minneapolis women's cooperative specializing in art by women. In 1949, she painted fifty-three historic sites for the Minnesota Centennial Commission.



Golden Valley

Painted in 1937

Glen Allison Ranney

Born 1896, Hustler, WI; died 1959, Minneapolis, MN

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

While this "Golden Valley" seems prosperous—the cows are well fed, the people are working, the sky is bright—the facial expressions of these workers portray a world-weariness and belie the otherwise optimistic tone of this work.

Glen Allison Ranney studied with Minnesota artist Cameron Booth and New York artist George Luks. Ranney was an instructor at the Minneapolis School of Art (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design) in the 1940s. Ranney was known for his rural Minnesota scenes. He exhibited widely at the Minnesota State Fair, in Chicago, in Cincinnati, and at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Carver County Summer Afternoon

Date painted unknown

Adolf Dehn

Born 1895 Waterville, MN; died 1968 New York, NY

Oil on board

Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Gift of Henry T. McKnight

The large size of this work is reminiscent of the large landscapes that were popular *in* the nineteenth century, such as James Larpenteur's St. Paul from Pigs Eye, also exhibited. The large canvas was often chosen to emphasize the grandeur of the land.

Adolf Dehn was primarily a lithographer although he did work in other media. The subjects of his lithographs included European cafe scenes and landscapes. His landscapes were very popular in the 1930s and 1940s.



Mississippi Bluffs

Painted in 1937

LeRoy Butscher

Born 1895

Oil on canvas

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society

Gift of the Minnesota Artists Association, via Syd Fossum

LeRoy Butscher's painting demonstrates the enduring popularity of the Mississippi River as a subject for artists. Traveling artists began painting scenes of the Mississippi River as early as the 1840s. Like many Minnesota artists in the 1920s and 1930s, Butscher experimented with new approaches to landscape painting. Here the fanciful trees remind one of an oasis in the desert, while the bluffs are rendered as smooth sculptural forms.

Beaver Bay

Date painted unknown

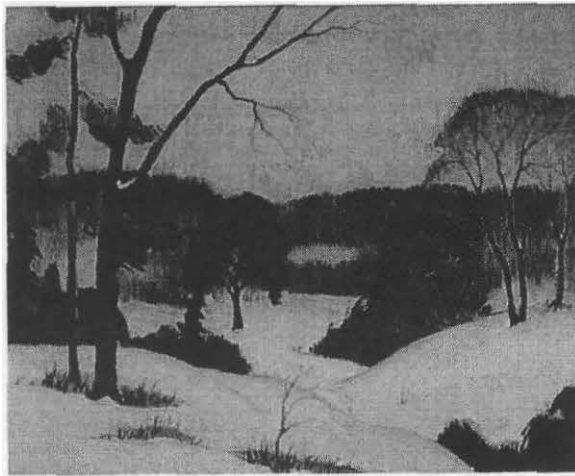
Elof Wedin

Born 1901, Sweden; died 1983, MN

Oil on canvas
 Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts
 The Julia B. Bigelow Fund

Elof Wedin's use of heavy lines and shapes gives this portrayal of boats on Beaver Bay, Lake Superior, a strong industrial feeling with a suggestion of Cubism.

Although Elof Wedin attended the Minneapolis School of Art (forerunner of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design), he worked primarily as a plumber fitting steam pipes. During the Depression he completed murals for post offices in Litchfield, Minnesota, and Mobridge, South Dakota. He also made several trips to Sweden to paint.



First Snow
 Painted in about 1936

Otto Moilan
 Born 1881; died 1937

Oil on canvas
 From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Gift of Jessie G. Gambill in
 memory of Shirley Moilan Gambill
 Reprinted *with* permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

This peaceful winter scene suggests that if the land got enough rest it would be energized for the spring. In 1936, Minnesota was in the midst of a severe agricultural depression. Farmers were losing their farms, and many were forced to move.



Ee2s for Sale
Painted in 1934

Stanford Fenelle
Born Minneapolis, 1909; died 1995
Gouache

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Gift of the St. Paul Public Library
Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

Although Minnesota was in the midst of the Great Depression, the golden hills and bright light depicted in this watercolor suggest an optimistic counterpoint to these struggles.

Stanford Pennelle studied at the St. Paul School of Art (predecessor to the Minnesota Museum of American Art). He worked as a watercolor instructor for the Works Progress Administration and Federal Art Projects. His work has been shown at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. He retired from the art department of Brown and Bigelow, a St. Paul company best known for its Boy Scout and commercial calendars.

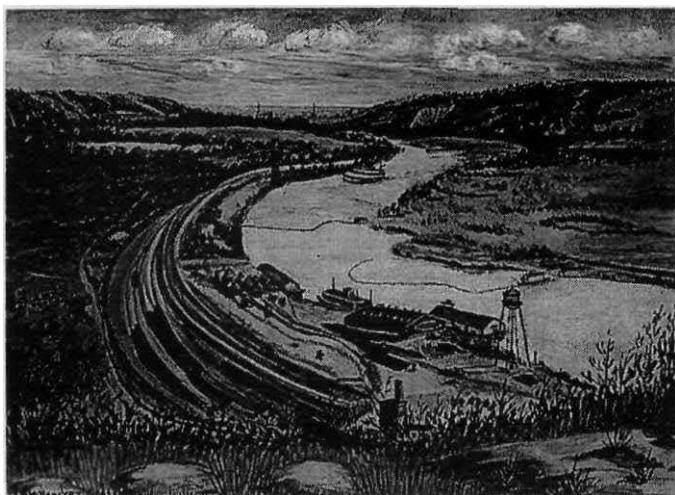
Love, Labor, Leisure
Printed in 1937

Adolf Dehn
Born 1895, Waterville, MN; died 1968, New York, NY

Lithograph
 Lent by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts
 Gift of Mrs. Patrick Butler

The rural setting depicted here was probably based on Adolf Dehn's memories of his boyhood in Minnesota. The artist, depicted in the lower right corner, is probably Dehn.

Adolf Dehn had a deep attachment to the land. When he was three, he began sketching farm animals and, later in life, he would often retreat to the quiet of the countryside of Europe, Colorado, or his home state of Minnesota to relax and sketch.



Municipal Dock and Railroad Yard

Painted in 1936

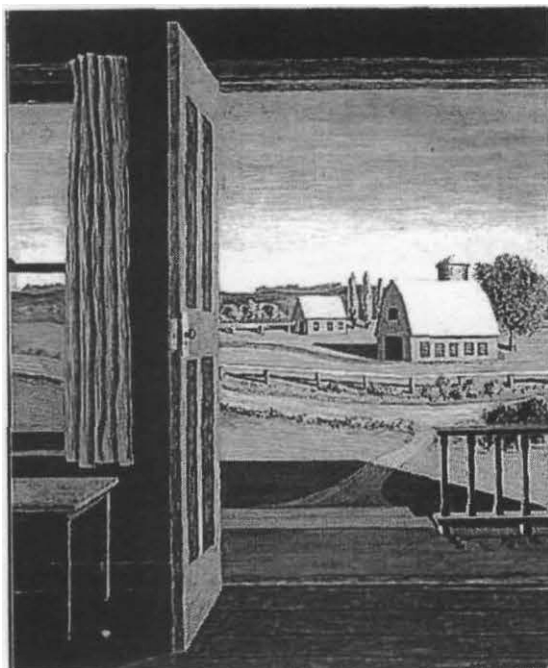
Edna G. M. Kahlert
 Born 1889; died 1970

Watercolor

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Gift of Georgianna A. Remy
 Reprinted with permission from the Minnesota Historical Society

Painted from Mounds Park in St. Paul, this work depicts a busy and clean industrial site set on the lush banks of the Mississippi River. The tour boat Capitol is heading downstream. The productivity shown in this painting belies the conditions of Minnesota in the midst of the Depression. Like other Minnesota Landscape painters of the time, Edna G. M. Kahlert rarely depicted the hard times of the 1930s.

Edna G. M. Kahlert worked primarily with watercolors and crayons, but also worked with embroidery.

**Farm**

Painted in 1940

Donald Taylor

Gouache

From the Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society Gift of Margo Sommers, M.D.

Reprinted with permission of the Minnesota Historical Society

Donald Taylor's use of trompe l'oeil (which means "to fool the eye") gives the illusion that the viewer is standing inside a house looking out at a farm. Perhaps the artist is showing how the farmer's life is intertwined with the land.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Background

The origins of the *An Artist's Paradise* began with my volunteer work at the Minnesota Museum of American Art (MMAA). The MMAA is located in the Landmark Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. The museum collects American Art from the nineteenth century to the present, with a special emphasis on Minnesota art. Initially, I worked in the library and then became a docent. As a result of this, my interest in Minnesota Art became apparent to the staff of the MMAA and I was often consulted on various matters pertaining to Minnesota art. Lin Nelson-Mayson, Curator of the MMAA, asked me to accompany her on several visits to examine potential acquisitions for the MMAA's collection.

In the Fall of 2001, I began to discuss with Nelson-Mayson the possibility of doing an internship at the MMAA as part of my Public History program at St. Cloud State University. She suggested that I do an analysis of the MMAA's registrar's files to determine the extent of the museum's collection of Minnesota art. After discussing this idea with Dr. Lee Simpson at St. Cloud State University, she suggested that I formally propose this idea to Dr. Don Hofsommer. Dr. Hofsommer signed off on the

internship. We agreed that because of the magnitude of the task that it should be a nine-credit internship, running from January, 2002, through the following June.

Internship

In order to determine what was meant by a Minnesota artist, a working definition was necessary. The definition that was adopted is as follows: "An artist had to have spent time in Minnesota or called Minnesota 'home' at some point in his or her career." This definition seemed sufficiently expansive enough to include artists who lived in the state for a portion of their career, such as visiting professors, or someone who began or finished his or her career in Minnesota. This definition did not include someone who simply depicted a Minnesota event, scene or person.

Using this definition, I began going through the registrar's file recording the following information on each artist:

1. Artist's name
2. Life dates (including place and birth and death)
3. When and where the artist lived in Minnesota
4. The number of works owned by the MMAA by the artist
5. Creation dates and title of the work held
6. The existence of any biographical material in the folders pertaining to the artist.

This was not a simple copy exercise. The registrar's files were often incomplete or inconsistent. Additional research was often required. Reference tools such as Peter Hastings Falk's *Who was Who in American Art 1564-1975: 400 Years of Artists in*

America, Kay Spangler's Survey of Serial Fine Art Exhibitions and Artists in Minnesota 1900-1970 and Rena Neuman Coen's Painting and Sculpture in Minnesota 1820-1914 were very helpful in gaining additional information. Over two hundred artists in the MMAA's collection were identified as Minnesota artists using this process.

During the internship, Lin Nelson-Mayson and I began to discuss the possibility of an exhibition on Minnesota artists using the MMAA's collection as the base for the exhibition. Both of us heard of an exhibition that the Virginia Historical Society had mounted using Virginia artists.¹ We both resonated with concepts behind the show and felt that it could serve as model for a similar show at the MMAA. Nelson-Mayson asked me if I would consider being the co-curator of the show and I said that I would.

Development of *An Artist's Paradise*

Using the list of artists I prepared during my internship, I began looking for patterns and themes that might be present in order to get a working hypothesis for the show. I decided that exhibition would explore the development of Minnesota's Artistic heritage with a focus on landscapes and changes to the land from 1840-1940. Paintings and works on paper would be used to represent the artistic representations of the state from early traveling artists to images presented later by artists with stronger cultural ties to the state.

Lin Nelson-Mayson decided to breakdown the 1840-1940 time spans into the following divisions: 1840-1890, 1890-1920 and 1920-1940. We also decided to do a

separate section on Minnehaha Falls, as the images of the Falls seemed to be prevalent throughout the 1840-1940 scope of the exhibit.

The exhibit was slotted to open in April of 2003 through June, 2003.

Using these dates, Nelson-Mayson and I identified possible lenders for the show and composed a letter of inquiry. We were considering only intuitions, not private collectors, at this point. Initial responses to our letter were encouraging and we began to compile preliminary lists of pieces to be included in the exhibition.

During this planning phase, the economy experienced a downturn and consequently, the MMAA experienced financial difficulties. In order to compensate for this downturn, we had to move up the opening date of the show from April to January, 2003. Our preliminary list soon became our final list. We worked with the MMAA's registrar, Eunice Haugen, to generate loan requests for the pieces we wished to include in the show. Our next task included writing the text for the gallery panels and labels. Nelson-Mayson and I decided to do in-depth labels for each piece included in the show because we felt that this would add clarity. It was decided that I would write the gallery panel text and Nelson-Mayson and I would both write the individual labels. We would both work on the arrangement of the pieces in the show and work with the MMAA's education director, Anita Gonialez, to develop the educational components for the exhibition.

These arrangements were altered when Nelson-Mayson resigned as curator at the MMAA in December, 2002. I assumed responsibility for writing all the labels with the MMAA's staff serving as editor. It also became my responsibility to

determine the arrangement or hanging of the exhibition as well as working with the education department.

By mid-January, all of the artwork for the exhibition arrived at the MMAA. Eunice Haugen and the installation crew began to hang the artwork in the gallery. Two reviewers made arrangements to see the show prior to its opening. They were Doug Hanson of the Star Tribune and Marianne Combs of Minnesota Public Radio: I was asked to be present for questions. The doors of *An Artist's Paradise* opened to the public on Sunday, January 25, 2003.

In retrospect, I would have changed one major aspect of the exhibition: the ending-date of the pieces in the show. I think the show would have appeared tighter and more cohesive to the viewer had it ended in the 1920s. Minnesota's art in the 1930s really began to reflect much more of the various strains of European Modernism than in the 1920s. This is coupled with fact that American Art itself was experiencing an identity crisis fueled by the Great Depression. Americans began to question their past—was it still a source of strength and direction, or was it time for a new direction. Artistically, this played itself out in the split between the Social Realists and the artists associated with Regionalism. The realists felt the past was bankrupt and the conditions in the country should be depicted as it was—breadlines, abandoned factories and ruined crops. The regionalists felt that the past was still usable, and could still serve as a guide, therefore the strengths of America should be depicted. This ideological split did not necessarily result in a complete abandonment or wholesale adoption of the tenets of European Modernism in the artists' work. This is what I think complicated

the show for the audience. The artwork included in the exhibition, prior to the 1930s, reflected changes in style with a consistent message. The message began to change in the 1930s. Perhaps a few more transitional pieces could have helped, but in retrospect I think not because of the complexity of the issues.

Notes for Chapter 5

¹ James C. Kelly and M. S. Rasmussen, The Virginia Landscape: A Cultural History (Charlottesville, VA: Howell Press, 2000).

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