



Loïs Mailou Jones: A Life in Vibrant Color

LOÏS MAILOU JONES. American, 1905-1998
Pêcheurs Sur La Seine, Paris 1937
Watercolor
Courtesy of Loïs Mailou Jones Pierre-Noël Trust.

On November 14, the Mint Museum of Art and the Loïs Mailou Jones Trust will proudly launch their new exhibition, “Loïs Mailou Jones: A Life in Vibrant Color.” Curated by Carla Hanzal, this show will feature nearly 70 works created over seven decades by this extraordinary 20th century artist. On view through February 28, 2010, the exhibition will showcase Jones’ career, ranging from the New Negro Movement to her contemporary interpretation of African, Caribbean, American and African American iconography. It will present a wide range of subject matter, techniques and the influences behind her paintings.

Loïs Mailou Jones was born in Boston in 1905. From an early age, Jones’ mother and teachers encouraged her artistic skills. This support landed her an apprenticeship at the Rhode Island School of Design and a scholarship

to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Upon graduation, Jones studied with a German textile designer and created textile patterns for furniture. However, as an anonymous designer, she was not receiving the credit she deserved for her work. This motivated her to pursue a career in painting.

The *Ascent of Ethiopia* (1932) is a pivotal work in Jones’ career because it is an early example of her ability to paint as a professional. This piece,

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depicting an Egyptian woman with an animated cityscape in the background, was inspired by Meta Warrick Fuller's 1914 sculpture *The Awakening of Ethiopia*, and it alludes to the political environment during the Harlem Renaissance. The painting's title expresses cultural identity because the ancients once referred to Africa as Ethiopia. Through the work's imagery, Jones offers varied details of the "ascent" of her African heritage and the closeness she felt to it.

In 1937, Jones set sail to Paris, where she studied at the Académie Julien and met contemporaries of Van Gogh, Gauguin and Cézanne. She adopted an *en plein air* method for painting landscapes on location, such as *Pêcheurs Sur la Seine, Paris* (1937). She also developed an Impressionistic style that is evident in compelling, psychological portraits such as *Jenny* (1943) and *Mob Victim (Meditation)* (1944). From her later travels to Haiti and Africa, her style evolved to incorporate harder edges and more color. Paintings like *Marché, Haiti* (1963) reflect her interest in an international pan-African culture and her earlier career as a textile designer.

This exciting exhibition uses artwork to illustrate the dynamic life of Loïs Mailou Jones. The collection of figurative, narrative and landscape paintings explore personal and social themes, as well as the injustice and discrimination that threatened to inhibit her success. This show encompasses the key influences in her career and the remarkable way she transformed a canvas.

For more in-depth information about this exhibition, please visit the Mint Wiki page at <http://mintwiki.pbwiki.com/>

~Leigh Ann Mesiti, Summer 2009 Intern

Identity Theft: How a Cropsey Became a Gifford.

Identify Theft: How a Cropsey Became a Gifford, on display from November 21, 2009 to March 27, 2010, will delve into the mistaken identity of perhaps the Mint Museum of Art's most important Hudson River School painting. Sanford Robinson Gifford's *Indian Summer in the White Mountains* (1862) entered the collection on a long-term loan as Jasper Francis Cropsey's *Mount Washington from Lake Sebago, Maine* (1871), but recent exploration revealed a



SANFORD ROBINSON GIFFORD
Indian Summer in the White Mountains 1862
(formerly attributed to Jasper Francis Cropsey as Mount Washington from Lake Sebago, Maine, 1871)
Oil on canvas, 16 x 30 inches
Mint Museum of Art, gift of the estate of Miss Elizabeth Boyd. 1945.3

Gifford signature and date beside an over-painted Cropsey signature. American Art curator Jonathan Stuhlman has compiled 10-12 related paintings, sketches and drawings of the highlighted artists' work, along with contemporary photographs of the site and documentation of the museum's investigation. The exhibition will give viewers a unique opportunity to participate in this historical detective story and learn more about the fascinating process of museum conservation.

Sanford Robinson Gifford and Jasper Francis Cropsey were both prominent painters of the Hudson River School in the mid-19th century. They painted at the same locations, exhibited at the National Academy of Design and were admirers of Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School. Although both artists painted with a Luminist style, Gifford was known for the warm, glowing or hazy light in his paintings, while Cropsey was better recognized for his brighter colors and sharper characteristics.

Because *Indian Summer in the White Mountains* had what appeared to be an original Cropsey signature, there was little reason to question the painting's attribution. When this work was included in a 1970 Cropsey retrospective, William Talbot, the assistant curator of the show, acknowledged stylistic differences but the painting was considered an experimental piece. A few years later, scholar Ila Weiss began research on Gifford's career and determined that there was a painting with the same dimensions as the Mint's piece missing from his inventory and that Gifford

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had small sketches that resembled the questionable painting. *Indian Summer in the White Mountains* was examined with a black light, but the Gifford signature was too old to be ascertained using infrared. It was not until 2004, during a routine conservation treatment, that a top layer of varnish was removed and the true artist's signature was uncovered.

In addition to fostering an appreciation of Gifford's and Cropsey's striking paintings, the purpose of this show is to provide the public with a behind-the-scenes view of museum scholarship. It will show how and why a painting can change its identity. It will lay out the research that went into examining the painting, the role of museum conservation and why knowing the provenance of an artwork is crucial. Jonathan Stuhlman hopes the exhibition will "empower people to look at things with their own eyes" and determine for themselves which painter they believe is the correct artist.

For more in-depth information about this exhibition, please visit the Mint Wiki page at <http://mintwiki.pbwiki.com/>.

~Leigh Ann Mesiti, Summer 2009 Intern

Art Corner: MMA

Focus on the Permanent Collection



EVERETT SHINN. American, 1876-1953
Café Martin, formerly Delmonico's circa 1908
pastel on paper
The Harry and Mary Dalton Collection. 1986.5.2

Everett Shinn was a member and the last survivor of "The Eight," a group of American artists also known as The Ashcan School. He became known for his cityscapes of New York, which was his home for a good deal of his life, and his ability to capture the vitality of the commonplace. His use of a dark palette in this depiction of the famous restaurant Delmonico's, currently exhibited in the Spangler Gallery at the Mint Museum of Art, presents a romantic impression of a rainy evening on Fifth Avenue. While there have been nine locations of Delmonico's in New York City, this image is believed to depict the one that faced Madison Square at Fifth Avenue and 26th Street. Because one of Shinn's favorite subjects was daily life in the city, specifically the parks and common areas where various races mixed, he was able to impact the art scene and social climate of the city. He made it more acceptable to depict the diverse population with a realistic style.

Shinn's pastels were bold and painterly. His strokes were thick and his paintings communicated a sense of immediacy. Through his long career, he experimented with oil, pastel, red chalk, gouache and watercolor, although his most famous works were done in oil pastels. Like many painters associated with the realist movement, Shinn often depicted women and men from diverse races, classes and social backgrounds in public spaces together. This exploration of lower-class subject matter is representative of the modern art movement. Shinn, like his peers in "The Eight," was concerned with depicting real life and the world around him. Many of his paintings were inspired by his window views and walks through the parks in New York City, where his most influential paintings were created.

Shinn was born in Woodstown, New Jersey, a large Quaker community. As a young lad of 14, he left Woodstown and enrolled at a technical institution, the Spring Garden Institute, in Philadelphia from 1888 to 1890. The school specialized in the teaching of mechanical drawing and architecture and was also attended by John Sloan, a fellow member of "The Eight." Following his education, Shinn spent a year working at the Thackery Gas Fixture Works designing light fixtures.

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After being fired for doodling in the margins of his plans, Shinn was urged by his former employer to go into a more creative field, citing the newspaper and magazine industries as examples.

In 1893, Shinn started working for the Philadelphia Press as an illustrator. Many consider this the true beginning of his art career. In later years, he would express his great dismay over the development of photography as the major source of pictorials in newspapers. He moved from one newspaper to another for the rest of his illustrating career, receiving a pay increase with each move. The attention to detail necessary for his newspaper illustrations is reflected in his later paintings, especially those of urban nature. In 1899, he quit the newspaper business and began working for Ainslee's Magazine. The magazine also employed his wife, a very successful illustrator who brought in a good deal of the household income. Shinn began displaying his work publicly in 1899 to mixed reactions.

~*Alex Ketchpaw, Docent*

New in the Spangler Gallery, MMA

The next time you're up in the Spangler Gallery you might notice that this eye-catching painting has replaced the Elliott Daingerfield landscape. When the Daingerfield painting (along with ones by Thomas Sully, Thomas Cole and a number of others) was sent out in July for some conservation work, it provided an opportunity for the Museum to bring in this special loan.

The artist who created this work, Edward Middleton Manigault, was born and raised in London, Ontario, but came to New York in 1905 to pursue his interest in art. In the first decade of the 20th century, Manigault experimented with the loose brushwork and bright colors of European modernism. *Adagio* signals a new direction in his work: a focus on a darker palette, sweeping rhythmic forms, and enigmatic female subjects. While the precise meaning of *Adagio* remains a mystery, the title, which is the technical term for a soft, low-toned musical piece, suggests that the artist was interested in the relationship between art and music, a suggestion reinforced by the singing central figure and the moody tonality of the painting.

Unfortunately, Manigault had little time to follow up on the promising start to his career; in 1915 he volunteered to serve as an ambulance driver in the first World War. Upon his return from combat his mental state was precarious. In 1922, after seven years of depression and anxiety, Manigault died of complications resulting from his attempts to produce inspirational visions through fasting.



EDWARD MIDDLETON MANIGAULT
American (born in Canada), 1887-1922
Adagio 1912
oil on canvas with original artist-designed frame
Anonymous loan, courtesy Hollis Taggart Galleries. T09.27

Along with being a striking work of art and a terrific example of one direction of early 20th century American modernism, this painting is also distinguished by the fact that it was included in the infamous Armory Show of 1913, which introduced the latest trends in American and European modern art to the (often shocked!) American public. It is exceedingly rare to find works that were included in the Armory Show that have not yet entered museum collections. The Mint is fortunate to be able to bring this one, which remained in the family of the original owner until recently, to Charlotte.

~*Jonathan Stuhlman, Curator of American Art*

Art Corner: MMCD

Focus on the Permanent Collection

Eva Hild hand builds big forms with clay that will dry slowly and not collapse. She sands the surface, sprays it with a white kaolin slip, then repeats the sanding and spraying until she achieves a delicate white, almost skin-like surface before final firing. The result is a piece like *Flutter*, currently on view in the Duke Energy Gallery at MMCD.



EVA HILD, Swedish, 1966-
Flutter circa 2004-2005
hand-coiled stoneware, sanded and sprayed with a white kaolin slip
before being fired
Museum Purchase: Windgate Fund. 2005.61

Hild lives and works in the quiet village of Sparsor, located near Göteborg in southwestern Sweden. Her inspiration is “the ever changing landscape of my own life and environment. I try to relate my work to my life. What is happening and how does it feel? Pressure. Flow. Strain. Ramification. Inside turn outside. As a starting point I put words onto my feelings, and use the vessel form to translate this into three dimensions. The size of the form relates to my body. The thin walls are pulled and bent in different directions.”

Flutter expresses a single sensation. The next time you are in the gallery, notice both its concave and convex surfaces, the seemingly paper-thin thickness throughout the stoneware, the importance of the empty or negative space, and the smooth white surface. Sara Danius writing in *Voices* comments “... one sees that the empty space has just as much character as do her flowing lines. In the final analysis this eradicates the difference between outside and inside, surface and depth. So if her forms represent something it is in a negative fashion, like a black and white film waiting to be developed.”

Sources: Artist's web page. "Voices" Contemporary Ceramic Art from Sweden, text Sara Danius. Carlsson Bokforlag 2006

~Rosemary Glatzel, Docent

Training Schedule

Veteran Docents of The Mint Museum

Monday, September 14 – MMA

9:30AM Coffee; 10:00AM Training
Update on Mint Museum Uptown with Phil Kline,
Executive Director

Monday, October 12 - MMCD

9:30AM Coffee; 10:00AM Training
Vision for Mint Museum of Craft + Design Uptown
with Annie Carlano, Director of Craft + Design, Allie
Farlowe, Assistant Curator of Craft + Design and Michelle
Mickey, Curatorial Assistant

Monday, October 26 – MMA

9:30AM Coffee; 10:00AM Training
Permanent Collections Review and Vision for the Mint
Museum Uptown: Contemporary Collection with Carla
Hanzal, Curator of Contemporary Art

Monday, November 16 – MMA

9:30AM Coffee; 10:00AM Training
Lois Mailou Jones: A Life in Vibrant Color
with Edmund Barry Gaither, Director of the Museum of
the National Center of Afro-American Artists in Boston.

Monday, November 30 – MMA

9:30AM Coffee; 10:00AM Training
Permanent Collections Review and Vision for the Mint
Museum Uptown: American Collection and *Identity
Theft: How a Cropsey Became a Gifford* with Jonathan
Stuhlman, Curator of American Art



Artists' Tidbits: MMCD

- Based in Winston-Salem since 1985, Jon Kuhn's glassmaking enterprise has grown from one person working alone to a 27-member artisan studio.
- Unlike most glass artists who work with molten or blown glass, Kuhn works with cold glass that is cut, polished and fused into various shapes building the piece from the inside out.
- All pieces begin with a core composed of high quality colored glass that is melted into thin sheets, and then laminated in various geometric patterns. After repeated steps of grinding, polishing and laminating, the core is then encased in clear camera lens-quality borosilicate glass for further grinding and polishing.
- Pieces reflect the artist's mathematics and music background, as well as his practice of Zen meditation.
- Kuhn collaborated with L. Bøsendorfer Piano Works of Vienna, Austria to produce the world's most expensive piano, the \$1.2 million Kuhn-Bøsendorfer that was unveiled in February 2009.
- MMCD mounted an exhibition of Kuhn's works from December 2003 to March 2004 and produced a full color catalogue of the show.
- *Pacific Rose* is currently in the front window of MMCD.

*Sources: Artist's web page, Joan Falconer Byrd
American Craft October-November 1995.*

~Rosemary Glatzel, Docent

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JON KUHN
Pacific Rose
Cut, ground, polished and laminated optical lead and borosilicate glass.
Stainless steel (stand and wires).
2005.4 A-B

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Tour Tips

- This is a new experience for me as a docent. I'm talking about our newsletter which I have enjoyed over these past years. I never thought about the fact that, "hey...somebody has to volunteer to do this!" So it is my turn and I'm starting with baby steps. Tour Tips it is!
- No matter which tour you are slated for, give yourself a little extra arrival time. NOT hours-but a few minutes at least. That gives you breathing room and a little organizational time.
- Check your areas to make sure all is as you thought it was.
- Coordinate with other docents if there are others with the tour. Respect the agreed-upon time lines!
- When you know what is coming, you are more confident and able to make your tour more comfortable.
- Make sure you update your information periodically. What I learned about **D.I.G.S.** six years ago is much different than the research coming out now. Check the published dates of the materials you use for your new information. ATTEND DOCENT MEETINGS!!
- For **D.I.G.S.** there is a 2005 Eyewitness Book, AZTEC, INCA, & MAYA, with great snippets and "Show and Tell" pictures in our gift shop at MMA. Don't forget the "Suggested Readings" list on **D.I.G.S.** we received this year.
- Please remember to allow a little browsing time if your schedule allows for it. "Feel free to look around this gallery and meet me at _____ in 5 minutes." Visitors may wish to return if something piques their interest.

I hope these tips are not too redundant and may help to some degree. Communication is an odd thing. It can make or break a museum experience. Make sure your guests have the opportunity to communicate with you as well as listen. Make sure they can hear you.

~Kathy Willox, Docent

Fan Mail

We really appreciate the information the docents provided. The students have been to many places where the tour was not guided. The guidance the docents provided was informative and kept the students on task. They were given specific tasks to complete and they enjoyed all of them.

~Collinswood Elementary

Our docent was definitely one of the best docents we've had. She used the art well – the students were riveted to her and the art she was presenting. Thanks!

~AP Art History, Providence High School

Art Quotes

Whether I'm painting or not, I have this overweening interest in humanity. Even if I'm not working, I'm still analyzing people.

~Alice Neel

I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way--things I had no words for.

~Georgia O'Keeffe



Welcome Letter

from our new Docent President

It's hard to believe that summer is at an end and hopefully all of you had a wonderful time. I know I did, getting my first hole-in-one (I can't stop telling everybody!). So now that we are relaxed, refreshed and renewed, our thoughts can turn to tours and training.

This is a very exciting time to be a part of The Mint Museum. We are all looking forward to hearing about the progress on the new building in Uptown and the changes that will eventually take place at Randolph Road. The staff intends to keep us well informed, and with the Docent Task Force working closely with them, our questions and concerns will certainly be addressed.

This year I will attend the National Docent Symposium in Toronto, which will offer four days of seminars, museum visits and networking with docents from all over the U.S. and Canada. I expect to return with new ideas from other successful programs.

As you know, a really great docent program is only as good as its well informed and caring volunteers. So on behalf of the Docent Board, I want to thank our returning veteran docents and give a warm welcome to our new trainees.

Hope all your tours are on time!

Jackie Stevenson, President



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