

introduction to

MY

ART

HISTORY



SHEILA HORI



Introduction To My Art History

by Sheila Hori

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USA

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Welcome

Welcome to a digital Retrospective of my oeuvre. Here are reproduced some 75-80 of my paintings and drawings. Hope you enjoy looking at them. When I go to the Art floor of the Chicago Public Library, I catch up on Chicago Modern Artists, my contemporaries. My amazement at the range of interests of Chicago painters during my lifetime in art (in Chicago, 1950s–present) led me to write brief essays showing my connections to the movement. The work gives me a glorious feeling of humbleness at the variety and quality, the range of ethnicities and cultures in Chicago art, beyond my expressions and eagerness to show off.

Acknowledgements

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Homage À Montréal

Au Canada

My modern art career began on my knees at age 9, with a muffin tin of paint, a brush and newsprint on the floor in the basement of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Gangly master Arthur Lismer, tall, wisps of hair backing a rugged neck, stood over us, vehemently saying, “bright colors, bold forms, and emphatic outlines.”

Brilliant success raised me to a high school scholarship. I joined adult classes, drew from Greek plaster casts and painted in oils with our Montréal painter, Jacques de Tonnancœur. We knew his paintings—rich, simplified modern figures. He was also promoting Paul-Émile Borduas, a painter moving from Catholic church art to surreal imagery after a visit to Paris. It was a great time for French Canadian avant-garde abstract forms. The paintings shocked us all.

At the end of World War II, we were moving, and the family visited other family, Villys and Cormacks, in Alix, Alberta, near the Canadian Rockies. At the Banff School of Fine Arts, A.Y. Jackson chose two of my mountain sketches for the permanent collection of the University of Alberta. Auntie Baa always asked for them when she visited Edmonton. Jackson wrote me, complimenting me for “structure and direct painting.” This was my Canadian triumph in modern art!

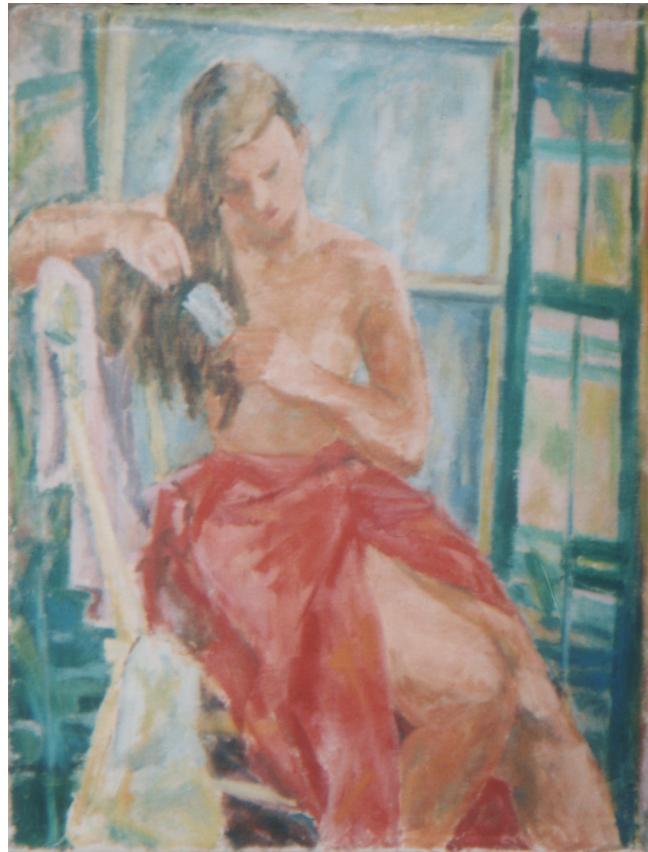
Canadian Heritage

The Group of Seven painters, including my teachers Arthur Lismer and A.Y. Jackson, pleased the Canadians. Organized in Toronto, they were painters of Canadian landscapes—Ontario Lake country in autumn colors, snowy Quebec cabins. Canada's modern artists were not stooges of Paris locale and training.

A Montreal group of French Canadians—Paul-Émile Borduas, Alfred Pellan, Jacques de Tonnancœur—bringing their own abstract images to the galleries, expressed the excitement of the differences of the two groups. Goodridge Roberts' emotional landscapes, and Marian Scott, a family friend whose paintings developed from the microscopes in Dad's genetics lab at McGill, were local inspirations. Cézanne was designated a founding “modern master” at school.

This was a heady time for modern art. I am grateful for the perceptions of Dad and the support of my whole family for the wonderful contacts made in the art movement of this time.

My work, after school, was primarily natural landscapes, paintings of Mount Mansfield at our “Call Farm” in Swanton, Vermont, balancing a love of nature and a developing art technique.



Seated Figure
Oil • 30 x 36 • 1948

**Madison
University Of
Wisconsin**

The family settled in Madison, Wisconsin. A major in fine arts in the big state school included a full schedule of print making, sculpture, drawing and design, painting.

Teachers were dedicated: Don Anderson, Santos Zingale, and Dean Meeker from Chicago. Earned University of Wisconsin B.S. in Applied Art, summer, 1949.



Montreal Newspaper
Encaustic • 20 x 28 • 1949



Montreal Torso
Encaustic • 20.5 x 26 • 1949

The Art Tour

After graduation, spent two years exploring the ambience for painting.

Montréal on Pine Avenue, halfway up Mont Royal, painting with encaustic (wax and color media on masonite), interesting textures, a little torch for singeing and adhering, and waiting.

New York painting with Yasuo Kuniyoshi at the Art Students League, printmaking with Gabor Peterdi at the Brooklyn Museum School. The New York Brooklyn Museum School produced a mix of European and American styles. Hans Hofmann was popular and influenced everybody with “modern” techniques!

The Museum of Modern Art burgeoned a great collection: Mondrian, crystal clear paintings hanging in the airy tea room on the fifth floor; Peter Blume, *The Eternal City*, with a projecting green Mussolini portrait at center; Picasso’s great *Guernica*.

Sheila was painting with a few rising artists, such as Paul Jenkins, who was a watercolorist of bright splashes of abstract, wet watercolor. She ran into Salvador Dali, the surrealist, in a 59th Street gallery.



Portrait of Shizuo Hori

Oil • 26 x 32 • 1952

On August 14, 1950, Shizuo Hori sent a telegram from Madison to his mom in Los Angeles, "Acquired PHD yesterday, wife today." Herewith Shizuo Hori, painted after we arrived in Chicago.

Marriage

Shiz earned a Ph.D. in electrical engineering on the GI Bill. After the Army experience and the dreadful family incarceration at Manzanar, a Japanese relocation center, he was ready for state-of-the art technology. At work in Chicago at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Shiz was automating big industry, auto and airplane companies.

**School Of The Art
Institute Of Chicago
SAIC**

Paul Weighardt

Shiz's job made it possible for me to spend time in school at the Art Institute of Chicago. First teacher/artist was Vera Berdich, etching, in the studio above the galleries next to the skylight. I found my niche in oil painting class with teacher Paul Weighardt. It was in the old school section of the Art Institute building, entered between the lions.

Weighardt was a student painter from the original Weimar Bauhaus, in a class taught by Paul Klee. Weighardt escaped from Nazi Germany with help from the American Friends Service Committee. The holocaust and march to war in Germany extended to art. The Nazis expunged modern artists and cried "degenerate" of the New modern art. Weighardt personified the opposite of "degenerate" in his presence in the Chicago school halls and classrooms.

Weighardt believed modern art was the most important achievement of the human spirit, and he showed us this spirit. His ardor and his urging inspired many student artists—and me—over our lifetimes.

Other examples of intermingling of European and American art throughout the upheaval of World War II emerged. America received artists from Europe to advance the creativity and human spirit of the new art—Hofmann, Mondrian, Albers, many others.



Poised Flower
Watercolor • 12x16



Bouquet
Watercolor • 12x16

Greta Van Leer led the northside seniors with charm and enthusiasm in this beautiful church on the Magnificent Mile. I joined us rich dilettantes (?) for watercolors. Once a year a superlative exhibit in church hallways and a gallery opening with prized recipes for goodies show the quality of the artists working here!

Fourth Presbyterian Church

In 2006 the Van Leers retired to Madison, Wisconsin, for their own creative work. The imaginative art class is taken on by Connie Bacon with her own talents, setting up odd still life tabletops and gathering attractive bundles for distinctive watercolor compositions. See next page.

Re-flowering of Watercolor

James Wisnowski

Teacher James Wisnowski rekindled my interest in watercolors. He sprang from the Chicago Academy of Art and Irving Shapiro's expert watercolor technique. I painted plein air pictures enthusiastically all around Old Town, sitting on the grass or another's doorstep, dipping brush to water, and glossing color over tilting drawing board and paper.

Like the great painters of the East spending summers with adults painting outdoors in the sun and spray of the East Coast, Jim conducts workshops in fishing villages of Maine, in the twisted old streets of Romanesque Europe, and in California. He maintained an excellent Chicago reputation as an urban landscape painter! (Northwestern Hospital lobby has four large commissioned watercolors!) The New Yorker artists monumentalized their energy: rhythm, color, chaos and curiosity—as Jackson Pollock and Wilhelm deKooning—replacing fame of Paris artists. Jim did very painterly watercolors here.

Wisnowski's marriage in Paris and move to California led me to watercolorists Tom Francesconi and Ingrid Albrecht at Old Town Arts Center and the Palette and Chisel.



Yellow House in Old Town

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005
Wisnowski class



Farm in Lincoln Park Zoo

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005



Big Tree

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005



Boats in Maine

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005
from photo



Boats in Maine 2

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005
from photo



Yellow House Down the Street

Plein Air; watercolor • 15x22 • 2005



Old Town Street Corner

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005

Later Impressions Jured Show



Wabash in the Rain

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005

From photo of Wabash



Wabash El

Watercolor • 12x18 • 2007



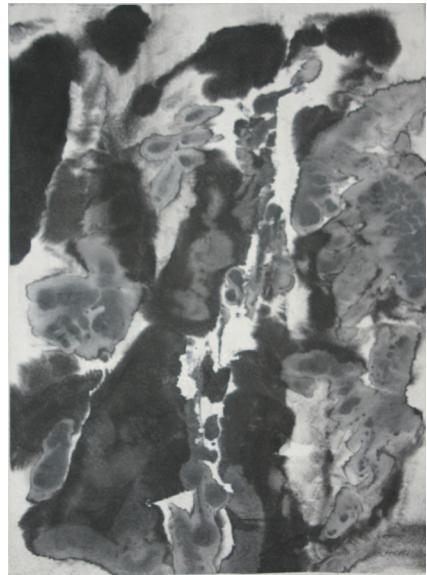
Old Town Block of Houses

Watercolor • 15x22 • 2005

Claire & Moe Strausberg Home Exhibit (painting sold)



Fig Leaf
Monotype • 12x18
SAN Exhibit 2007



Garden at Dusk
Monotype • 12x18

Monotype prints are made by working on a sheet of glass or Plexiglas. The artist paints with ink or watercolor, acrylic or whatever on the glass and makes a print. This print can also first be manipulated on the back of the paper with line and intensity of pressures. Ingrid Albrecht taught a popular Palette and Chisel Monotype Workshop, summer 2006.

Monotypes

I enjoy the remarkable flow of the medium on the plate. I am encouraged to explore and expand forms in an abstract manner. Ingrid, in demonstrations, adds animals and people and African mountains from her world travels to the original dash of color! A versatile medium, Monotype is showing up in Senior Artists Network exhibitions in 2008–2009.



Getting Up
Monotype • 12x18



Red Blob
Monotype • 12x18



Big Mouth Abstract

Monotype, ink and watercolor • 12x18

Later Impressions Exhibit (SAN) 2007



Two Figures
Watercolor • 12x18 • 2007



Female Reclining Figure
Watercolor • 12x18 • 2007

For me, abstracting is the excitement of painting. The fun is discovery as one paints the models. I'm not into the Palette and Chisel painters' leaning toward perfect classical figures, smoothly broken, modeled body forms, and a brownish color-graded background. Figure painting is a current interest.

At Present

Figures

My southside neighborhood, Woodlawn, includes the publishing offices of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. The cover of each issue shows the Doomsday Clock, with hands close to midnight, the emblem of the Bulletin's nuclear message. Nearby, the University is the birthplace to the Bomb, December 2, 1942. I exhibit and paint in the neighborhood.



Looking Northward beyond 61st Street, Campus Site
Watercolor • 15x22 • 2007



Looking Southward to 61st Street
Watercolor • 15x22 • 2007

Neighborhood

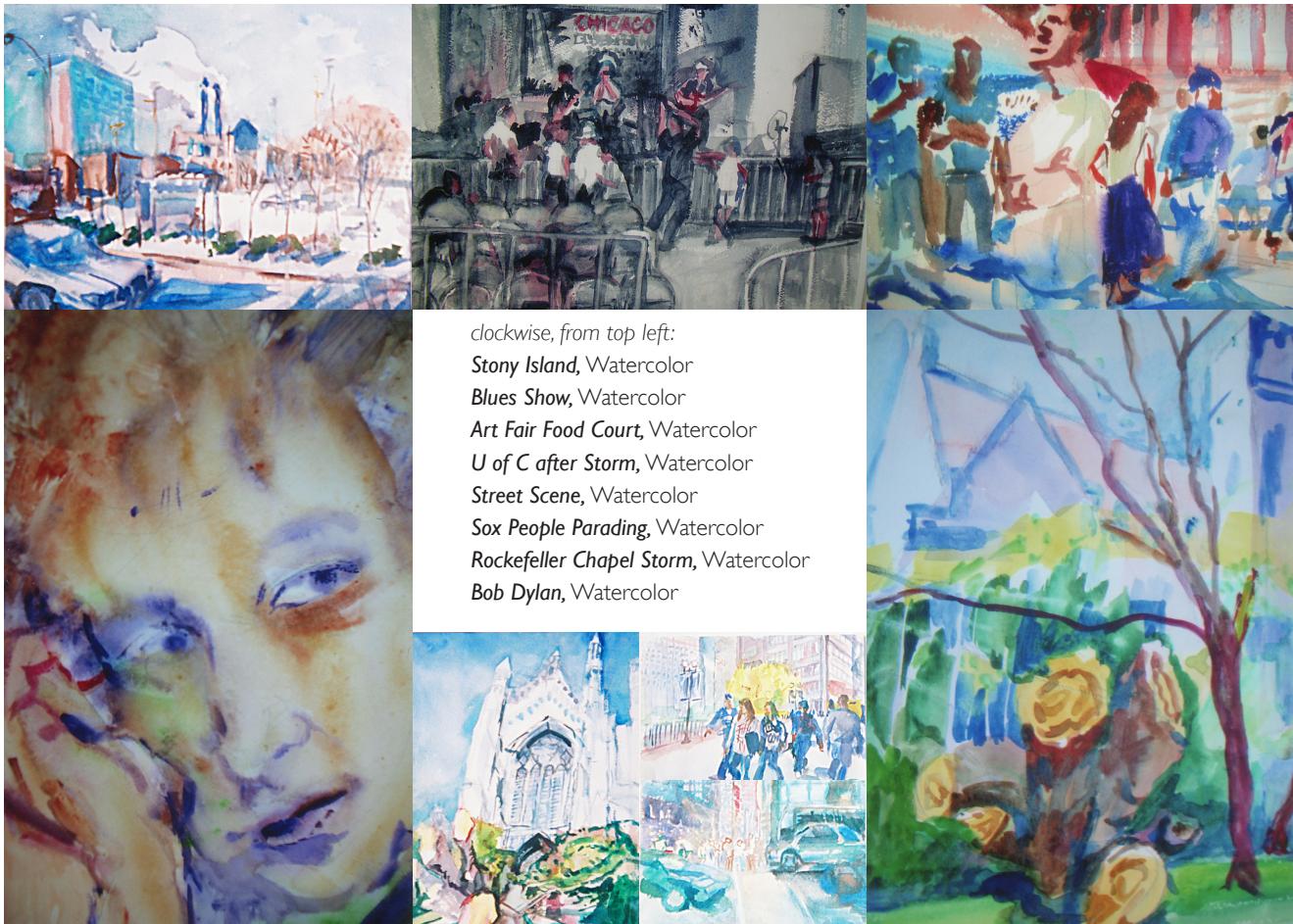
A few blocks away, artist Dan Pederman has redeveloped a ragged brick Recycling Center into an architect-designed Experimental Station. This runs a Saturday farmers' market, book and author signings, jazz sessions, debates, and a café with "slow food" and used Leftist books, new to our area. The Woodlawn neighborhood climbs out of urban racial disintegration and the Blackstone Rangers gang activities, is close to the University of Chicago campus, and represents a new Chicago-style social mix of neighbors.

Memorial

We have lost some of our heroes over recent years—Seymour Rosofsky, Leon Golub, Ed Paschke, and now, Don Baum—artists whom we knew, familiar from openings and continuous displays, discussion, socializing, and friendship. We realized our amazement at their latest work. This also includes SAIC classmate Cliff Westerman, who, as a veteran, experienced war, blood, death. With his artistic imagination and gauged expression, he produced a large cache of work. This work is increasingly exhibited as the legacy of our outrageous historical period. It is sculpture done in wood and steel with extraordinary craftsmanship, and watercolors and prints and paintings of quixotic and charismatic fantasy.

Chicago art has evolved, engaging our awe and wonder. Imagist painters have charged our consciousness of the human family by promoting monsters, cartoon characters, death men, men with deformities and disabilities, informed from comic strip characters. They emerge uniquely, through each artist's individual vision. This stuff lives on in later Chicago art.

Working in visual art has continued to have meaning for me as I move on in imagination. Painting breeds creation with the senses, life blood for adventure, and achievement.



Activities

Art stretches the scope in human history! Dan Pederman, ecoartist, uses mushrooms from the field for ink, as in drawings installed at the Harris Theater downtown, or Chicory cans labeled with neighborhood history, leftover buckets of pink paint, and University lab equipment. (For the range of subjects, see the Museum of Contemporary Art Exhibit Catalog 2006.) My potpourri of Chicago activity paintings is displayed on this page.

Sheila Hori
Curriculum Vitae

Education
Schools and Classes

B.S. in Applied Art, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1949
All work for M.A. in Art History, with Joshua Taylor, University of Chicago, 1964–1967, major in Modern Art
School of the Art Institute of Chicago, with Paul Weighardt, oil painting, 1950s
A.A. in General Studies, Harold Washington College, City Colleges of Chicago, 1992
Renaissance Court and Fourth Presbyterian Church Senior Programs, 1990s
Palette and Chisel Academy and the Old Town Art Center, Chicago, 1990s

Awards

2001 Senior Artist Network Exhibit, Award for Excellence
2002 Community Arts Assistance Program (CAAP) Award for Preparation, slides for portfolio
2004 CAAP Award for Presentation, matting for art fair
2006–2007 CAAP Award for Technique, watercolor class, tuition and materials
2009 CAAP Award for Catalog Presentation

Exhibitions

Antioch College; Madison, Wisconsin; Chicago Art Institute Rental Gallery; Hyde Park Art Center exhibits; Exhibition Momentum 1955 and 1957; Randolph Street Gallery; Stevenson Gallery; Palette and Chisel exhibits, including plein air exhibit; Renaissance Court Gallery; City Hall of Chicago; Senior Artist Network exhibits, 2001–2009, including member shows and juried, Later Impressions exhibits; Hyde Park Community Art Fair shows for 1998–2009; Strausberg Home Exhibit 2007.



Photograph courtesy of Larry Chait

*Visual art has continued to have meaning
for me as I move on in imagination.
Painting is life blood for adventure.*