

Jun-2000

Inside Front and Back Covers: From the Bridgewater State College Permanent Collection

Roger Dunn

Bridgewater State College, rdunn@bridgew.edu

Recommended Citation

Dunn, Roger (2000). Inside Front and Back Covers: From the Bridgewater State College Permanent Collection. *Bridgewater Review*, 19(1), inside front and back covers.

Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/br_rev/vol19/iss1/3

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

FROM THE BRIDGEWATER
STATE COLLEGE
PERMANENT COLLECTION

Breaking Up—West River, c. 1925

Aldro T. Hibbard

(Falmouth, Mass., 1886–Rockport, Mass.,
1972)

Oil on canvas, 30" x 36"

Winter scenes exemplified by this large painting are among the most loved and admired themes of Aldro Hibbard's works. Done in the Impressionist style that was popular in America in the early twentieth century, this landscape was mostly painted on-site in the West River Valley of Vermont, near the artist's home. In searching out his subject matter in the frozen woods and villages, Hibbard would load a sled with up to 50 pounds of paint supplies and equipment. Impressionists were known for experiencing some difficult working conditions in painting outdoors, but only Hibbard regularly endured the icy cold for his art. Here the painting done on-site is revealed in the convincing portrayal of the midday light of late winter on the snow, trees, hills and sparkling water. A range of brushstrokes effectively define these different elements: long and thin for the trees, broad and thick for the ice, and small and broken for the moving surface of the water.



Hibbard learned his style at the Massachusetts Normal Art School (now the Massachusetts College of Art) and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, where he studied with such well-known painters as Frank Benson, Phillip L. Hale, and Edmund Tarbell (who is represented by a painting and a pastel in the College's Permanent Collection). The Museum School trained a generation of painters in the prevailing styles of Academic Classicism and Impressionism; Hibbard excelled in the latter. He received a traveling scholarship from the Museum School that allowed him to study in Europe from 1913 to 1916, where he came into direct contact with the works of the French Impressionists. He went on to teach at Boston University.

Hibbard found his subject matter not only in Vermont, but in the landscapes throughout New England and Canada. Summers were spent on either Cape Cod or Cape Ann, where he founded and directed the Rockport School of Drawing and Painting that was later named for him. The Permanent Collection includes another work by Hibbard, a small painting titled *Cape Cod Marshes, Provincetown*. These two Hibbard paintings are among a group of early gifts by alumni that form the original core of the Bridgewater State College Permanent Collection, now housed in a gallery within the Art Building.

*Text by Roger Dumm, Professor of Art
Photo by Rob Lorensen, Assistant Professor
of Art*



FROM THE BRIDGEWATER
STATE COLLEGE
PERMANENT COLLECTION

Spring Scene, c. 1901

John J. Enneking
(Minster, Ohio, 1841 — Hyde Park
[Boston], Mass., 1916)
Oil on canvas, 22" x 30"

John Joseph Enneking was among the earliest of American painters to adopt the style of the French Impressionists. His contact with the work of these artists dates from 1873–76 and 1878 when he was studying in Paris, the years in which the first highly controversial Impressionist exhibitions took place. This was the period in which the style found only a limited number of supporters, even among artists. Yet Impressionism was to remain Enneking's primary approach to painting for the rest of his life.

Spring Scene is one of the finest examples of Enneking's Impressionism, and comes from a series of spring landscapes with flowering trees done within the period spanning the 1880s into the early 1900s. The theme proved to be commercially successful. Here the May landscape is

dominated by a flowering white apple tree on the left, juxtaposed against a smaller pink flowering tree. They are the keynotes in a composition of light colors, through which the unifying elements of pink and white are distributed. On the right, for example, the progression into distant space is defined by a smaller white tree and a pink shoreline beyond. Lush greens and turquoise blues complete the view of grass, trees, water and sky.

The subject, palette and technique are most closely related to the work of French Impressionist Claude Monet, with whom Enneking had painted while in France. The line of poplar trees that separate the foreground and background spaces in this painting recall the series of poplar paintings by Monet done only a few years prior to *Spring Scene*. Enneking's thick impasto paint, applied in small strokes of the brush, also reveals the closeness of this Impressionist style to Monet's. This brushwork is particularly thick on the flowering white tree, helping to establish its dominance in the composition. The blue shadows under the tree follow the Impressionists' rejection of black and grey for shadows.

The locale in which this was painted could have been near the artist's summer home in North Newry, Maine, or, more likely, within the Blue Hills region near his

home in Hyde Park, now part of Boston. Enneking enjoyed the landscape of the Blue Hills so much that he was instrumental in establishing the Blue Hills as a protected reservation, and one of its parkways is named for him.

During his career, Enneking was well-known and successful in American art, exhibiting to critical acclaim, receiving numerous awards, and having his work acquired for collections in major U.S. museums. His obituary in *American Art News* (November 25, 1916) summed up the reputation he had attained:

For fifty years he has been a marked figure in the local art world, both by reason of his forceful and unique personality, and the high ideals in painting he set for himself. A splendidly honest, bluff, kindly man, engaged throughout his long life in an unending search for beauty and the ultimate truth of art—such was John J. Enneking.

This painting was given to the College by alumni not many years after the death of the artist, as a major gift of art, and it remains one of the most important works within the Permanent Collection, housed in the Art Building gallery.

*Text by Roger Dunn, Professor of Art
Photo by Rob Lorensen, Assistant Professor
of Art*