

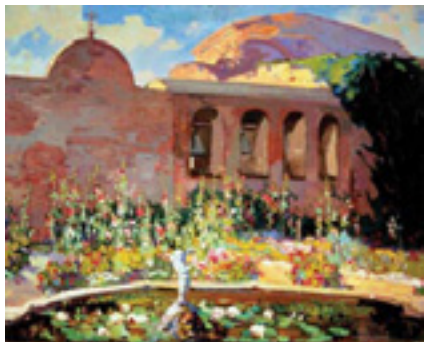
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top: Cornelius and Jessie Arms Botke, *Mural from The Oaks at Ojai* (detail)

above: Donna Schuster, *In the Sacred Garden*,
The Edward H. and Yvonne Boseker Collection

below, clockwise from left: Franz Bischoff, *Mission Yard*,
California Poppies (porcelain), *Roses* (porcelain)



Dear Friend of the Museum,

As we enter a new year, The Irvine Museum is busy with new and continuing projects in the goal of fulfilling our mission to collect, document and display the remarkably rich period of California art from 1850 to 1950.

In March, the museum will open “INNER VISIONS: Women Artists of California.” We will display works by women in three major periods: the Tonalist style of the late 1800s; the Impressionist period of the early 1900s, and the Regionalist style of the 1930s and 1940s. The central attraction in Inner Visions will be the 7 foot by 26 foot mural by Jessie Arms Botke, the gift of The Oaks at Ojai, for which it was painted in 1953.

The museum is also working towards publication of two important books and accompanying exhibitions, one on the life and art of Arthur Beaumont (1890-1978) and the other on John Frost (1890-1937). Beaumont spent his life painting and documenting the history of the U.S. Navy, painting powerful images in watercolor of our navy’s capital ships. The project is the work of Geoffrey Beaumont, son of the artist. John Frost was one of California’s great Impressionist painters. The son of Arthur B. Frost, a noted American illustrator and close friend of Guy Rose, John Frost painted with Rose and became a brilliant Impressionist in his own right. He died young, at the age of 46 from tuberculosis.

In addition, our museum is touring two significant shows throughout the country. SELECTIONS FROM THE IRVINE MUSEUM, will be shown at the Monterey Museum of Art and at the Portland Art Museum. CALIFORNIA IMPRESSIONISM is scheduled to be exhibited at the Arthur Ross Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania Art Museum and at two other venues under discussion.

I am delighted to share these wonderful events with you, our valued patrons, and invite you to participate with us as we start a promising year of activities.

—James Irvine Swinden, *President*

CURRENT EXHIBITION

Franz A. Bischoff: The Life and Art of an American Master
November 12, 2011 through March 8, 2012

Franz A. Bischoff (1864-1929) began his artistic training at a craft school in Bohemia at the age of 12. He trained in ceramic decoration. In 1882, he came to the United States and worked as a painter in a ceramic factory in New York City. He moved to Pittsburgh, then to Fostoria, Ohio, and finally to Dearborn, Michigan, continuing to work as a porcelain painter.

Bischoff became one of the foremost porcelain painters of his day and is still regarded today as the greatest American porcelain painter. His porcelain works were exhibited at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago and at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition



from top: Franz Bischoff, *Alpenglow*; *Roses*
(Private Collection, Courtesy of The Irvine Museum)

in St. Louis. He founded the Bischoff School of Ceramic Art in Detroit and in New York City. Additionally, he formulated and manufactured many of his own colors, participated in exhibitions and won several awards, earning a reputation as “King of the Rose Painters.”

He first visited California in 1900, and finding the climate and scenery appealing, made plans to move his family, arriving in Pasadena in 1906. In 1908, he built a studio-home along the Arroyo Seco in South Pasadena, which included a gallery, ceramic workshop, and painting studio. In 1912, he took an extended tour of Europe where he studied the works of the Old Masters and the Impressionists.

On his return to California, Bischoff turned to landscape painting and gradually abandoned porcelain decoration. Through the 1920s, he painted the coastal areas of Monterey and Laguna Beach, the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the desert near Palm Springs. Some of his most charming works were painted in the small central California village of Cambria. In 1928, he and his friend, the artist John Christopher Smith, traveled to Utah, where they painted in Zion National Park. He died at home, on February 5, 1929.

Bischoff exhibited with the California Art Club and the Laguna Beach Art Association. In 1924, he received the Huntington Prize, an annual award given for the most popular painting at the California Art Club exhibition.

The Mural from the Oaks Hotel in Ojai by Jean Stern

The stellar attraction in our forthcoming show, “INNER VISIONS; Women Artists of California” (March 17 to June 7, 2012) will be the mural from the venerable Oaks Hotel in Ojai, a generous gift to The Irvine Museum from the Oaks at Ojai. The mural was painted in 1953 by Jessie Arms Botke, with assistance from her husband Cornelis Botke. It is a large work, measuring nearly 7 feet high by 26 feet long and it represents a scene in the Everglades, with a large variety of bird life and flora set on a gold-leaf background.

The mural graced the ballroom wall of the old Oaks Hotel for nearly forty years when, in the course of renovating the hotel, the decision was made to tear down the wall in order to enlarge the room. Mindful that this was an important work of California art, the hotel offered the mural as a gift to The Irvine Museum with the condition that the museum assume the costs of removal and restoration of the work. Fortunately, the mural was painted on two large pieces of canvas, and not directly on the wall. The mural was carefully removed and restored to its full glory.

Cornelis and Jessie Arms Botke,
Mural from the Oaks Hotel, Gift of
The Oaks at Ojai



At the time we received the mural, in 1992, the museum was located in a large suite on the 12th floor of our building. As such, it was impossible to bring the mural into the museum because it would not fit into the elevators. So, for more than 18 years the mural was displayed at Joan Irvine Smith Hall, at the University of California, Irvine. A few years ago, the museum relocated to the ground floor of our building, thus making the elevator restrictions moot.

Finally, we are able to display this majestic and magical mural in our museum. As we do not have a single wall that measures 26 feet, the mural will be displayed in its two parts, one measuring 14 feet long and other 12 feet long. They will be shown on opposite walls so the viewer will, in effect, be in the middle of the scene. Do not miss your opportunity to see this remarkable work of art.

from left: Cornelius and Jessie Arms Botke at work on a mural, Los Angeles 1939, image courtesy of the Botke Family; Donna Schuster, c. 1914, image courtesy of Ray Redfern; Meta Cressey onboard the S.S. Carpathia, image courtesy of David and Donna Cressey; Henrietta Shore, image courtesy of Andree Dell



UPCOMING EXHIBITION

Inner Visions: Women Artists of California

March 17 through June 7, 2012

California, in the early 20th century, had more women artists than other regions of the country. In the East, the entrenched art establishment had existed for more than a century and it consisted solely of men artists. It was deemed inappropriate to have women earning a living and pursuing a career in the arts. By contrast, there was no entrenched art establishment in Los Angeles as both men and women artists began arriving at the same time. Artists who lived here in the early 1900s were part of a close circle of friends and included men and women. Here are just a few of the important women artists of California:

JESSIE ARMS BOTKE (1883-1971) was a Chicago artist who specialized in painting works that featured exotic birds surrounded by wondrous plants and blossoms. Little interested in landscape, Botke worked in the brilliant and colorful style of Art Deco. She worked in oil and often added gold and silver leaf in the background.

META CRESSEY (1882-1964) was one of the earliest modernist artists in Los Angeles. She came to Los Angeles in 1917, with her husband Bert Cressey (1883-1944), also a painter. The pair were among a small group of modernist artists who founded the Los Angeles Modern Art Society. The group also included Helena Dunlap (1876-1955), Edgar Keller (1868-1932), Henrietta Shore (1880-1963) and Karl Yens (1868-1945). The society held non-juried shows, featuring modern works by local as well as foreign artists.

Ruth Peabody (at right) and an unidentified artist painting *en plein air*, image courtesy of Kevin Courter



ANNA HILLS (1882-1930) received her education at Olivet College in Michigan, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Cooper Union Art School in New York City. She moved to Los Angeles around 1912, and relocated to Laguna Beach in 1913. Originally a figure painter, Hills turned to the landscape after her move to California. She became a founding member of the Laguna Beach Art Association in 1918. A tireless leader of that group, she served as president from 1922 to 1925. A highly respected teacher, Hills promoted the visual arts through lectures and the organization of special exhibits which circulated among Orange County public schools.

DONNA N. SCHUSTER (1883-1953) was born in Milwaukee. She attended the Art Institute of Chicago where she graduated with honors. She then studied at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School and with William Merritt Chase (1849-1916) in 1912. In 1913, she moved to Los Angeles. She spent her summers at a second studio-home in Laguna Beach. In 1928 she began to study with Stanton MacDonald-Wright (1890-1973), and thereafter her work reflected the influence of Cubism and Expressionism. Schuster died in 1953, when her home burned as a result of a brush fire in Griffith Park.

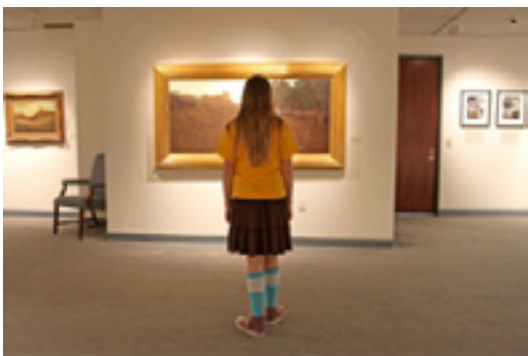


MARION KAVANAGH WACHTEL (1870-1954) studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and in New York with William Merritt Chase (1849-1916). For several years she taught at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1903, she won a commission from the Santa Fe Railroad to paint murals in their San Francisco ticket office. There, she met and studied with William Keith (1838-1911). Keith recommended that she go to Los Angeles to see artist Elmer Wachtel. Elmer and Marion fell in love and were married the following year in Chicago.

In 1921, the couple moved to the Arroyo Seco area of Pasadena. As inseparable painting companions, they traveled throughout Southern California and the Southwest. Perhaps so as not to compete with her husband, Wachtel worked primarily in watercolor throughout their marriage. She received high praise for her works, which are delicate, lyrical interpretations of the landscape, in a manner that shows her masterful control of tone and color.

After her husband's death in 1929, Wachtel temporarily lost interest in painting. She resumed working around 1931, painting landscapes around her home in the Arroyo Seco, the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, and the Sierra Nevada Mountains, most of which were done in oil paint.

from top: Donna Schuster, *Figure at a Desk*, The Edward H. and Yvonne J. Boseker Collection; Henrietta Shore, *Mountain Deer*, Collection of Richard W. Silver and Robert Hayden III



Educational Outreach Programs ***by Dora James, Curator of Education***

Since the beginning of the new school year in September, we have welcomed over seven hundred elementary school students and our calendar is filling up with field trip reservations from numerous schools in our area. We welcome many first-time student visitors as well as a good number of returning ones.

Over the summer, we hosted and provided transportation vouchers for day camps in the area, including the Advanced Bird Camp students from The Sea and Sage Audubon in Irvine. The day campers had an early morning hike through the Audubon trails and ponds, observing birds and their habitats in the surrounding creek and chaparral. Once the students arrived at the museum, they were able to make the connection between nature and the depiction of nature in its pristine state as recorded in our early California Impressionist landscapes. Inspired, they returned to their day camp to try their hand at their own creations.

In view of steadily decreasing budgets for art education in our schools, it is imperative that museums and educational centers step up to the challenge and provide much needed programs for our children. By providing creative art experiences and hands-on nature studies, our museums and educational centers offer opportunities for students to observe and develop cognitive and creative thinking skills.

Thank you for giving some of our kids the only opportunity they may ever have to go to a museum.

—Jean De Nisi, Office Manager, Taft Elementary School

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