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Higher Ground

A Century of the Visual Arts in East Tennessee

Introduction

Higher Ground is the first permanent exhibition documenting the history of artistic achievement in East Tennessee. The selection of approximately 50 objects includes works from the KMA collection supplemented by those borrowed from public and private collections. Many of the featured artists spent their entire lives and careers in the area, while some moved away to follow their creative ambitions. Others were drawn to the region by its natural beauty, as the wealth of landscape imagery in this exhibition attests. Together, these artists' works form the basis of a visual arts legacy in East Tennessee that is both compelling and largely unheralded. *Higher Ground* allows viewers to follow the history of artistic activity in the region over roughly a century of development and learn about the many exceptionally gifted individuals who have helped shape the area's visual arts tradition.

KNOXVILLE
MUSEUM OF ART





James Cameron (Greenock, Scotland 1816-1882 Oakland, California)

***Belle Isle from Lyons View*, 1859**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2013 purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve, Clayton Family Foundation, KMA Collectors Circle, Guild of the Knoxville Museum of Art, and Townes Osborn, June & Rob Heller, Alexandra Rosen & Donald Cooney, John Z. C. Thomas, Laura & Jason Bales, Mrs. M. Blair Corkran, Jayne & Myron Ely, Kitsy & Lou Hartley, and Sylvia & Jan Peters

Scotland-born James Cameron was one of East Tennessee's first professional painters. He settled in Chattanooga and earned a reputation for his portraits and detailed panoramic landscapes. Many of Cameron's scenes depict nature being invaded by settlement. According to art historian and Cameron scholar Frederick Moffatt, the artist first painted this dramatic Knoxville overlook while visiting the city in August of 1856. He created at least three later paintings based on this same view, each with minor variations. This canvas is the largest of the four known versions. It was owned by Adolph Ochs (1858-1935), legendary American newspaper publisher and owner of *The New York Times*, who spent much of his youth in East Tennessee.

Grand Ambitions

While East Tennessee's earliest inhabitants produced works of art for millennia, it was during the late nineteenth century that the area's community of professional artists—both trained and untrained—reached a critical mass. This development reflected the prosperity fueled by booming local industries such as marble quarrying, mineral mining, and lumbering. Railroads linking East Tennessee to other urban centers sparked further growth. Knoxville soon emerged as the hub of economic and artistic activity within the region.

Born in Scotland, **James Cameron** was one of the first professional painters in East Tennessee, earning a reputation for detailed portraits, and panoramic landscapes reflecting nature's beauty invaded by settlement. **Lloyd Branson** returned from studies in Europe in 1878 and became a guiding force for art in Knoxville, both as teacher and artist. After studying with Branson, **Catherine Wiley** mastered impressionism while pursuing art training in New York, and introduced the style to artists and patrons following her return to Knoxville. Often portraying the domestic world of women and children, Wiley's luminous canvases became increasingly bold and expressive until her career was cut short by an undisclosed mental illness in 1926. **Charles Krutch**, dubbed the "Corot of the South" for his soft, atmospheric style, was among the earliest local artists to train his brush on the Smokies. From the 1890s until the last years of his life, he traveled deep into the mountains and captured their ever-changing character in scores of oil and watercolor paintings.

Branson, Wiley, and Krutch banded together with other local artists and patrons to form the **Nicholson Art League** (1906-1923), and organized large-scale art exhibitions for three major cultural expositions held at Knoxville's Chilhowee Park: the Appalachian Expositions of 1910 and 1911, and the National Conservation Exposition of 1913. Each of these exhibitions included important regional artists' works along with those by dozens of internationally known American artists.

Tennessee Marble

The Tennessee marble industry began during the late 1830's with the discovery of major veins in Hawkins County. Around 1850, Tennessee marble was discovered in Knox and Blount Counties where, with greater access to rail, the stone industry took off. By the 1880s, Knoxville became known as "The Marble City," and its extensive quarries supplied stone used throughout the region and in the construction of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., New York's state capitol, the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, New York's Grand Central Station, and the New York Public Library's famous stone lions. The Knoxville Museum of Art is also clad in pink Tennessee marble.

Despite its name, Tennessee marble is not a true marble due to its sedimentary structure and lesser hardness that are more akin to limestone. However, its high density, low porosity, water resistance, and range of color contribute to its distinguished history as a highly attractive building material.



Lloyd Branson (Union County, Tennessee 1853-1925
Knoxville)

Hauling Marble, 1910

Oil on canvas

McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture, University of
Tennessee, Knoxville

Enoch Lloyd Branson was one of the most talented and versatile East Tennessee artists of his era. Under his lasting influence, the local art scene reached a new level of activity and quality. Branson received artistic training at East Tennessee University (later renamed the University of Tennessee) and the National Academy of Design in New York. Upon the artist's return in 1878, he established a successful portrait painting business with photographer Frank McCrary at 130 Gay Street in downtown Knoxville. Branson devised a method of producing vivid portraits based on photographs, which provided his primary income as an artist. However, he earned greatest recognition for heroic genre scenes such as *Hauling Marble*, which portrayed East Tennessee's thriving marble industry. The painting won the gold medal at the Appalachian Exposition of 1910. In addition to his studio work, Branson was active as an art teacher, training and inspiring a new generation of talent including Catherine Wiley, Adelia Lutz, and Beauford Delaney, whose works are included in this exhibition.



Albert Milani (Carrara, Italy 1892-1977 St. Petersburg, Florida)

Column Capital, circa 1930

Tennessee marble

Candoro Arts and Heritage Center

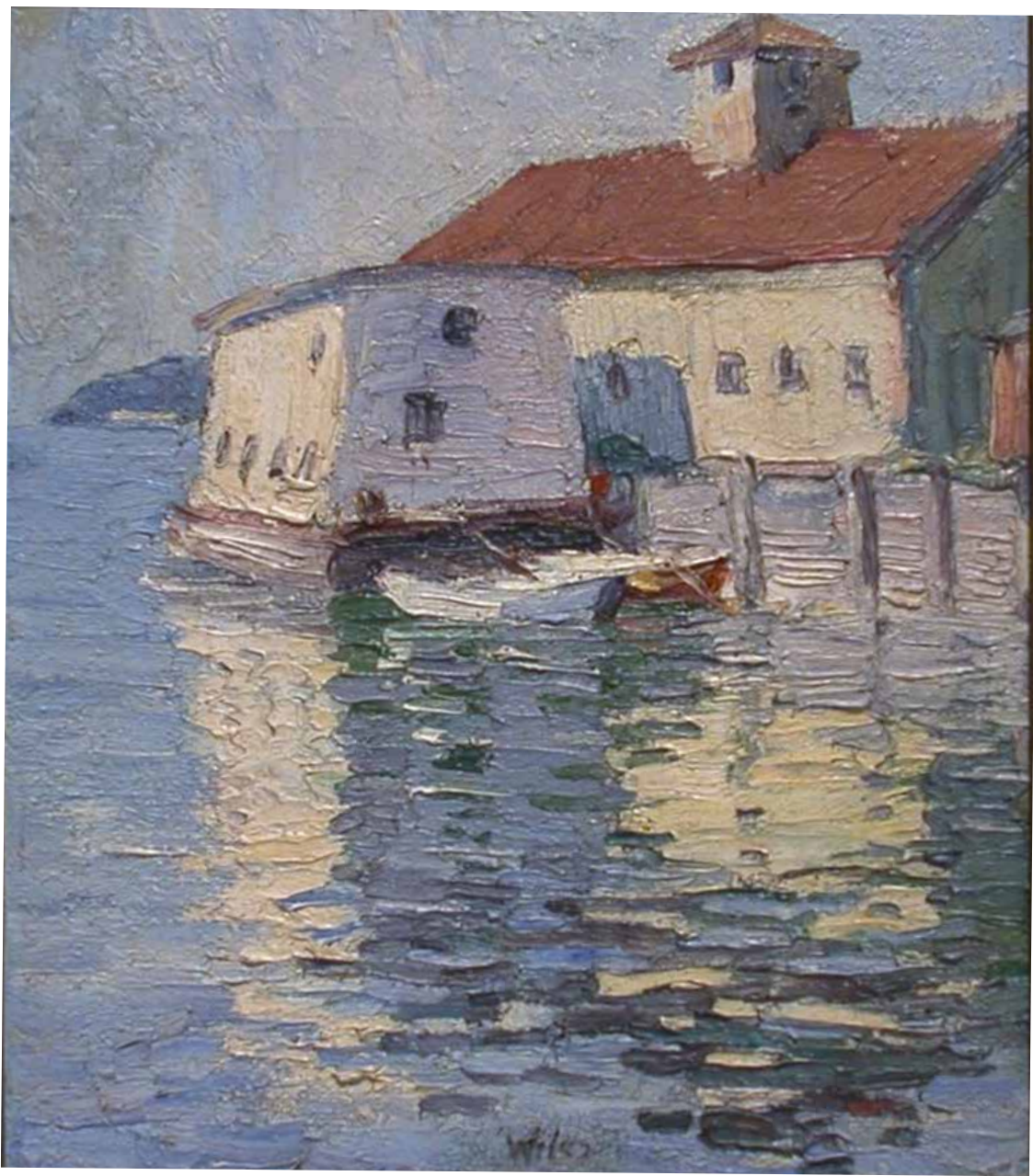
Head of a Ram, circa 1930

Carved marble

Candoro Arts and Heritage Center

Albert Milani was a talented marble sculptor who settled in Knoxville after 1913. He began working for the Candoro Marble Company in 1927 and created decorative marble sculpture for buildings around the country during his long career with Candoro. Milani usually used imagery from classical antiquity interpreted in a sleek, modern art deco style. One of the sculptor's major projects in Knoxville was carving the eagles on the façade of the Knoxville Post Office in 1934.

Candoro Marble Company in South Knoxville played a major part in the city's history as a marble producer for the entire nation. Designed by Knoxville architects Barber and McMurry, Candoro's headquarters on 4450 Candora Avenue was built in 1923 to showcase the quality and craftsmanship of locally produced Tennessee marble.



Catherine Wiley (Coal Creek [now Rocky Top],
Tennessee 1879-1958 Norristown, Pennsylvania)

Boats and Water, circa 1915

Oil on canvas

16 x 14 3/4 inches

Knoxville Museum of Art, 1972 gift of the Wiley Family in memory of
Catherine Wiley



Catherine Wiley (Coal Creek [now Rocky Top],
Tennessee 1879-1958 Norristown, Pennsylvania)

Morning, 1921

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 1972 gift of the Women's Committee of the Dulin
Gallery

Anna Catherine Wiley was one of the most active, accomplished, and influential artists in Knoxville during the early twentieth century. She taught art at the University of Tennessee, helped organize area art exhibitions, and was a driving force in the Nicholson Art League, a prominent local art association. Wiley studied with Frank DuMond at the Art Students League in New York and spent summers in New England working with Impressionist Robert Reid. She returned to Knoxville following her studies and brought with her a mastery of Impressionism. Wiley specialized in scenes of women amid their daily lives rendered in thick, brightly colored pigment. *Morning* features a more expressive variety of brushwork often seen in her late paintings.

Wiley's work is represented in museum collections around the country, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her promising career ended in 1926 when she was confined to a psychiatric hospital where she was without access to her studio supplies. The exact nature of the artist's illness remains unconfirmed.



Catherine Wiley (Coal Creek [now Rocky Top],
Tennessee 1879-1958 Norristown, Pennsylvania)
***Untitled (Woman and Child in a Meadow)*, 1913**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2012 purchase with funds provided by Ann & Steve Bailey, KMA Collectors Circle, Martha & Jim Begalla, Betsey Bush, Joan & Victor Ashe, Lane Hays, Lindsay & Jim McDonough, Dorothy & Caesar Stair, Nancy & Charlie Wagner, Sylvia & Jan Peters, Patricia & Alan Rutenberg, Barbara & Steve Apking, Mary Ellen & Steve Brewington, Jayne & Myron Ely, Cathy & Mark Hill, Donna Kerr, Melissa & Tom McAdams, Townes Osborn, Alexandra Rosen & Donald Cooney, John Z. C. Thomas, Stuart Worden, Marie & Bob Alcorn, Jennifer Banner & James Schaad, Barbara & Bernie Bernstein, Arlene Goldstine, Stevens & Greg Hall, Kitsy & Lou Hartley, Ebbie & Ronald Sandberg, & Joseph Trahern, Jr. Conserved by Cynthia Stow, Cumberland Conservation Center

Untitled (Woman and Child in Meadow) represents Knoxville Impressionist Catherine Wiley at the height of her career. She won the top award for regional painting at the 1910 Appalachian Exposition in Knoxville, and evidence suggests the artist selected this canvas for inclusion in Knoxville's 1913 National Conservation Exposition. In a review of the 1913 exposition, one *Knoxville Journal & Tribune* critic wrote that "Miss Catherine Wiley's work has attracted general comment and praise. She has three pictures on exhibition, two of which are new examples of her art. The most pleasing of the three is a study of a woman and child out-of-doors. The figures are sitting in strong sunlight, while a dark wooded hillside forms the background. The piece is strongly handled, and shows originality and force."



Catherine Wiley (Coal Creek [now Rocky Top], Tennessee 1879-1958 Norristown, Pennsylvania)

Young Woman Reading with Parasol, circa 1918

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2020 gift of the Edwin Packard Wiley family

Painted at the height of Catherine Wiley's career, this composition embodies the artist's characteristically American adaptation of French master Claude Monet's Impressionism, one in which she adjusts the gauge of her brush and the application of color to describe atmospheric effects, but without sacrificing narrative details. Beyond her interest in painting light, Wiley sought to capture the inner life of her sitters, a goal she discussed in an essay she composed for *The Woman's Athenaeum* in 1912: "Only when paintings make us realize more acutely the poetry that lies within us all, the romance that we ourselves feel, the power of our own spirit, the 'externalisation' of our own soul, as it were—only then it has meaning."



Catherine Wiley (Coal Creek [now Rocky Top],
Tennessee 1879-1958 Norristown, Pennsylvania)
Morning Milking Time, circa 1915

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2012 joint purchase of the Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library, and the KMA with funds provided by the C. M. McClung Collection Endowment, Natalie & Jim Haslam, Ann & Steve Bailey, Ellen "Sis" Mitchell, Kay & Jim Clayton, Laura & Jason Bales, Patricia & Alan Rutenberg, John Z. C. Thomas, and Kimbro Maguire & Penny Lynch

Although best known for her depictions of women and children in quiet domestic settings, Wiley here depicts a male worker on her sister's farm in northwest Knox County. This painting reflects the Knoxville artist's mastery of Impressionism, and her ability to convey through vibrant color and bold brushwork the heat and light of the late morning sun as it falls on the East Tennessee landscape.



Thomas Campbell (Beverly, Yorkshire, England 1834-1914 Maryville, Tennessee)

Untitled, circa 1900

Oil on board

East Tennessee Historical Society

After spending most of his career as a missionary, Campbell came to Knoxville in 1893 to focus on landscape painting. He was a core member of the Nicholson Art League and participated in the Appalachian Exposition of 1910. This untitled painting is a classic example of the small, intimate scenes of everyday pastoral life in East Tennessee for which the artist was known. In addition to his studio practice, Campbell was active as a teacher and founded the art department at Maryville College.



James W. Wallace (Campbell Station, Knox County
1852- 1921 Knoxville)

***East Tennessee Landscape*, 1907**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2013 purchase

James Wiley Wallace was a major figure in Knoxville's art scene at the turn of the twentieth century. He is best known for his often mural-sized paintings of rural life and historic local events. At the Appalachian Exposition of 1911, he won a regional award for the "best collection of paintings." This East Tennessee pastoral scene represents the first work by Wallace to enter the KMA collection. A winding stream and flock of sheep provide points of entry into an idyllic rural setting at the end of a day.

Wallace was a University of Tennessee graduate who, in addition to his painting career, was also active as editor in chief for the *Knoxville Daily Tribune* during most of the 1880s, and as a justice of the peace in the mid-1890s. He is buried in New Gray Cemetery just a few blocks north of the KMA, and among his pall bearers was close friend and fellow artist Lloyd Branson.



Lloyd Branson (Union County, Tennessee 1853-1925
Knoxville)

Ellen McClung, 1921

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 1999 gift of Dr. & Mrs. Aubra Branson

One of Knoxville's first professional painters, Lloyd Branson excelled at portraiture of distinguished local figures and scenes of outdoor life in East Tennessee. Here he portrays Ellen McClung (1894-1992) who was born into one of Knoxville's leading families. Married in 1928, she and her husband Thomas Berry became major patrons of the arts in Knoxville and funded projects including the commissioning of Carl Milles' bronze sculptural fountain *Europa and the Bull* on the campus of the University of Tennessee. Here, McClung appears in her debutante gown presumably in her family's home at 1111 Circle Park, now part of the University of Tennessee Campus, with a scenic view of the Smoky Mountains in the distance.



Hugh Tyler (Kalamazoo, Michigan 1885-1976 South Kent, Connecticut)

***Untitled (Mediterranean Cove)*, 1914**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2020 purchase with funds provided by Sasha & Charlie Sealy

Hugh Tyler came to Knoxville when his family relocated to be near the source of marble used for the columns manufactured in part by his father's machine company. Although best known as the uncle of famed writer James Agee, Tyler was a talented and versatile painter and an active member of the Nicholson Art League. He produced Impressionist-inspired canvases such as *Mediterranean Cove* as well as elaborate, hand-painted decoration for Hoskins Library and other buildings on the University of Tennessee campus.

Tyler won a top award for "best collection in the Appalachian region" at the 1913 National Conservation Exposition held at Knoxville's Chilhowee Park. Tyler lived most of his adult life in Greenwich Village with several family members including Agee. The two were very close and the character Andrew in *A Death in the Family* is based on Hugh Tyler. Tyler is also noteworthy as having given Beauford Delaney his first lesson in drawing and painting.



Lloyd Branson (Union County, Tennessee 1853-1925
Knoxville)

***Going Home at Dusk*, 1920**

Oil on board

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2010 purchase with funds provided by Kay & Jim Clayton, Martha & Jim Begalla, Ann & Steve Bailey, Patricia & Alan Rutenberg, Townes Osborn, and Sylvia & Jan Peters

Although Lloyd Branson is best known for his conservative portraits and local history scenes, he occasionally experimented with contemporary painting modes. In *Going Home at Dusk*, Branson adopts Impressionist brushwork to capture the waning light of a humid evening on an East Tennessee farm. Dabs of bright pigment and broad areas of thin paint emphasize luminous atmospheric effects at the expense of narrative details. This interest in light and atmosphere was in all likelihood inspired by Knoxville painter and close friend Catherine Wiley, whose vibrant Impressionist canvases are on view nearby. Branson's late interest in light and atmosphere was in turn conveyed to the painter's star pupil Beauford Delaney, whose work appears in the next section of this gallery.



Charles Krutch (South Carolina 1849-1934 Knoxville)

Sunset, early 1920s

Oil on board

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2009 gift of Dr. and Mrs. William J. McCoy III

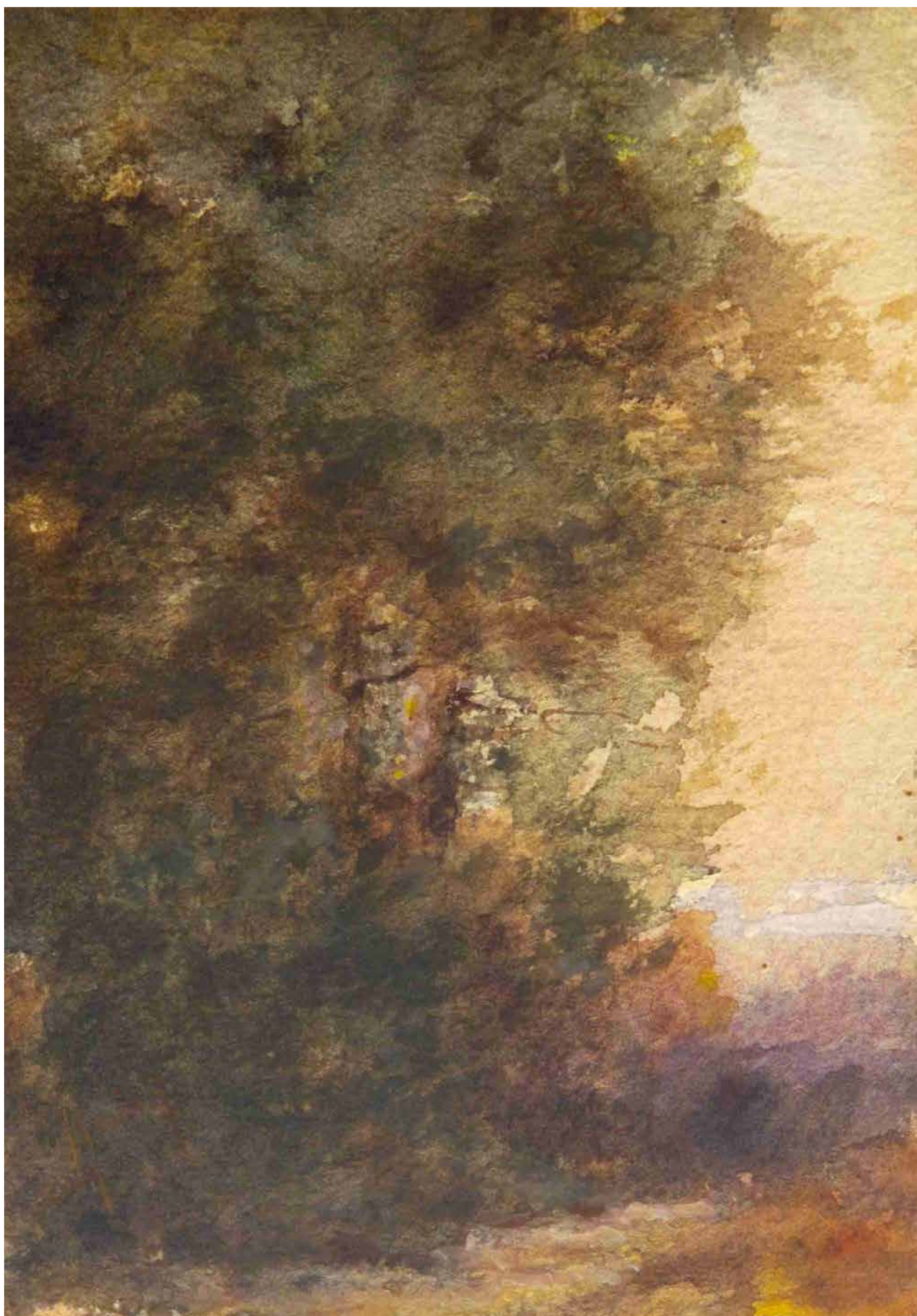


Charles Krutch (South Carolina 1849-1934 Knoxville)
Untitled (Chimney Tops), late 1920s

Watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2008 bequest of Dr. Frank Galyon

Charles Christian Krutch was one of East Tennessee's first painters to specialize in scenes of the Smoky Mountains. Krutch earned the nickname "Corot of the South" for his soft, atmospheric watercolor and oil paintings of the mountain range that served as his sole focus. The self-taught artist achieved his trademark style by working thick layers of oil paint with his fingers as well as brushes. Krutch's goal was to capture the changing "moods" of the mountains and regarded his subjects as "just like people." He won a regional award for best watercolor at the 1913 National Conservation Exposition in Knoxville. However, it was not until 1934, months before his death, that the 84-year-old artist received recognition outside Knoxville when the federal government commissioned him to create a series of paintings of the Smoky Mountains for a traveling exhibition as part of the Public Works of Art Project.



Charles Krutch (South Carolina 1849-1934 Knoxville)

Untitled, early 1920s

Watercolor on paper

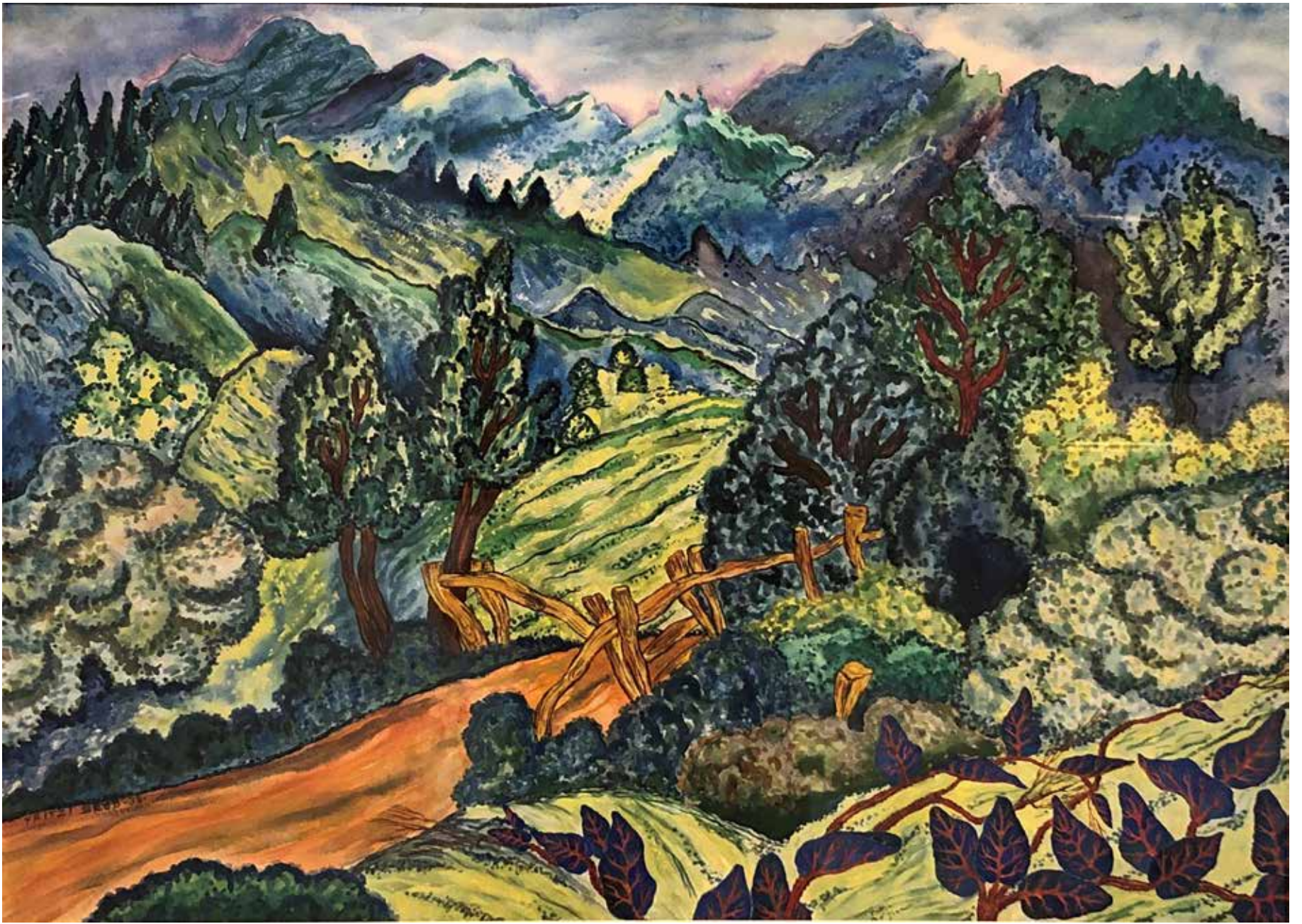
Knoxville Museum of Art, 2009 gift of Dr. and Mrs. William J.
McCoy III

Lure of the Smokies

Many artists from outside East Tennessee came to the area between 1920 and 1950 in order to capture the wild beauty of the Smoky Mountains. The Smokies had long been inaccessible to all but the most intrepid, but intensive logging and the post-World War I development of mountainside resorts opened roads and trails for visitors. This period of artistic interest in the Smokies coincides with efforts to preserve this unique wilderness area, which culminated in the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1934.

Ansel Adams, best known for his epic images of Yosemite and other western landmarks, visited the Smokies in 1948 and produced black and white photographs that capture the area's lush terrain. Twenty years later, color landscape photography pioneer **Eliot Porter**'s dye transfer prints of the park generated widespread attention after being featured in the acclaimed monograph *Appalachian Wilderness*.

Rudolph Ingerle, **Louis Jones**, and other landscape painters from around the country often spent summers in East Tennessee, journeying deep into the Smokies to make sketches. Jones, a native of Pennsylvania, was so entranced by the area that he permanently settled in Gatlinburg and continued to paint mountain scenes until his death in 1958. Louisiana artist **Will Henry Stevens** made extended pilgrimages to the Smoky Mountains throughout his career and captured every nuance of the area's natural beauty in delicately abstracted works.



Fritzi Brod (Prague, Czechoslovakia 1900-Chicago 1952)

Smoky Mountains, Tennessee, 1938

Watercolor and gouache on paper

Fine Arts Collection, U.S. General Services Administration

Fritzi Brod was printmaker and painter who immigrated to the United States in 1924. She is known for her vibrant and color landscapes and images of women. Brod's manner of depicting the visible world as a series of flattened, colorful shapes was influenced by European modernism, and her extensive experience as a textile designer.



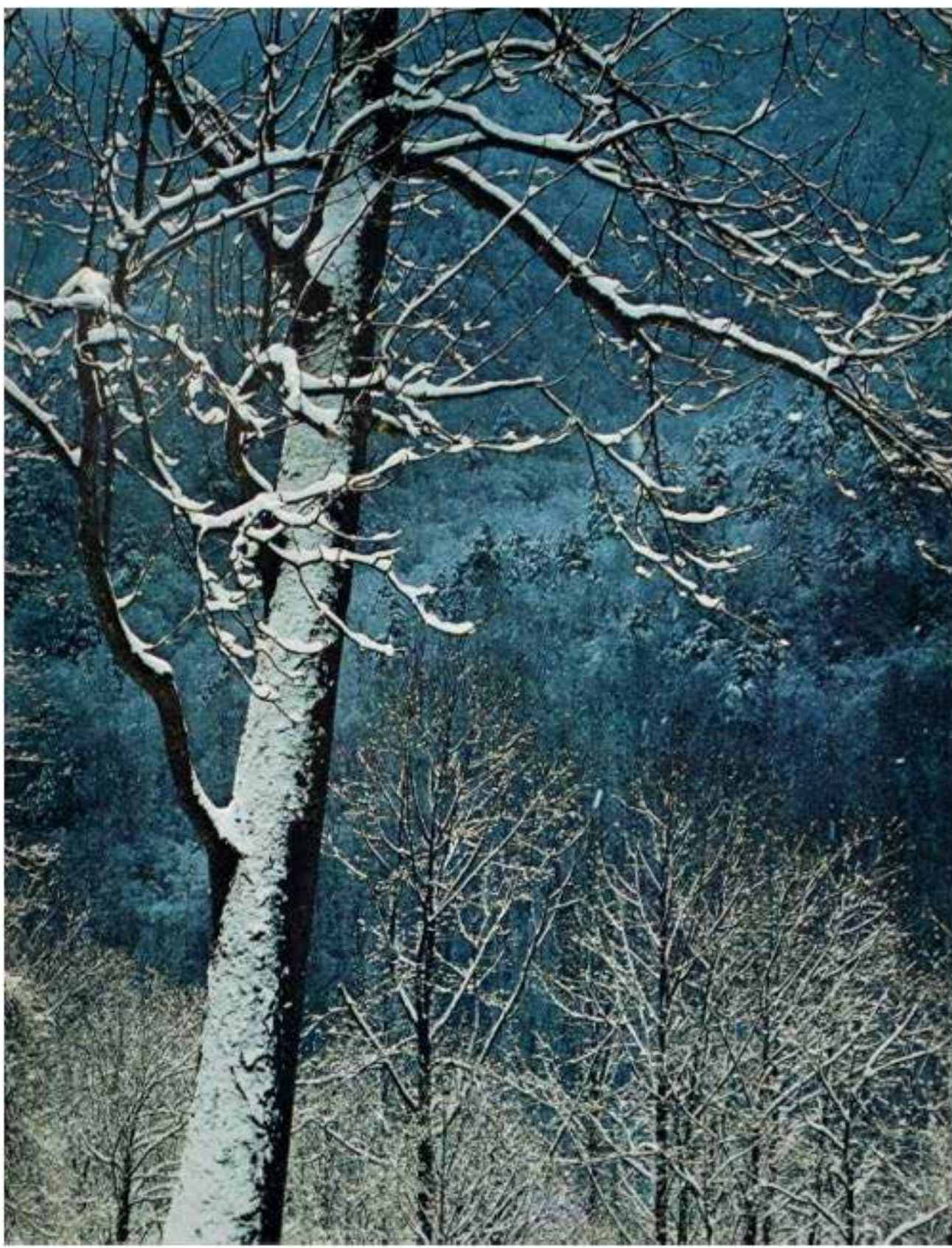
Ansel Adams (San Francisco 1902-1984 Carmel, California)

Dawn, Autumn Forest, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee, 1948

Gelatin silver print; printed circa 1970-1976

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2009 gift of Patricia & Alan Rutenberg, and Mary Ellen & Steve Brewington

Adams is widely considered to be America's greatest landscape photographer. He is best known for his timeless black-and-white images of Yosemite National Park and other natural wonders of the American West. Few are aware that Adams traveled to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1948—his first and only recorded visit to Tennessee—in order to take photographs as part of a Guggenheim Fellowship on America's national parks and monuments. Evidence suggests Adams discovered the Smokies to be an intimidating subject. In a letter of October 9, 1948, the artist confides "The Smokys [sic] are OK in their way, but they are going to be devilish hard to photograph..." Adams only published four images from his visit, and prints of these are exceedingly rare.



Eliot Porter (Winnetka, Illinois 1901-1990 Santa Fe)
***Tree and Mountain Valley, Great Smoky Mountains
National Park, Tennessee, 1969***

Dye-transfer print, printed early 1980s

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2015 purchase with funds provided by Ellen R.

“Sis” Mitchell

Porter visited the Smoky Mountains several times between 1967 and 1969 and took dozens of vibrant photographs in preparation for his highly-acclaimed monograph *Appalachian Wilderness* (1971). He did not publish his photographs in editions, and as a result his prints are exceedingly rare. In 2012, the KMA was fortunate to purchase two other Porter prints, *Red Tree near Cades Cove, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, October 7, 1967, 1967*, and *Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1968*.

Changing Fortunes, Changing Scenes

By the mid-1920s, Knoxville's once thriving art scene had begun to stagnate as the city's economic potential failed to materialize and local attitudes grew more conservative. Furthermore, Lloyd Branson's death in 1925 and Catherine Wiley's institutionalization in 1926 led to a void in artistic leadership. Young artists often concluded that their best chance for artistic success was to relocate permanently to major art centers.

Born in Knoxville in 1901 to a Methodist Episcopalian minister, **Beauford Delaney** and his younger brother Joseph demonstrated early artistic talent. Their parents supported the brothers' creative aspirations, and Beauford's talents came to the attention of painter Lloyd Branson, who served as an early mentor. Facing the additional hurdle of racism, the brothers left Knoxville in the mid-1920s to pursue their art careers in larger arenas, but followed very different artistic paths. After studying in Boston, Beauford chose New York and later Paris as the ideal settings for his experiments with expressive abstraction. He attracted a host of distinguished friends including Georgia O'Keeffe, Alfred Stieglitz, Willem de Kooning, James Baldwin, Henry Miller, and Louis Armstrong. He became known for his radiant portraits and landscapes in which he explored color—luminous color—applied with explosive brushwork. Visible references to the outside world began to fade as the artist sought what he believed were the healing powers of light as embodied in the brilliant hues of his palette.

Joseph Delaney, on the other hand, headed for Chicago before settling in New York, where he established himself as a tireless and prolific painter of Manhattan's urban scene. Over the span of his 60-year career, Joseph displayed a remarkable ability to convey a vibrant modern world in transition while representing an unvarnished record of his energetic painterly process. He returned to Knoxville to visit his family over the years and eventually moved back to his hometown in 1986. The Knoxville Museum of Art has worked diligently to call attention to the artistic accomplishments of both brothers by hosting or organizing such exhibitions as *Beauford Delaney: From New York to Paris* (2005), *Beauford Delaney: Gathering Light* (2017), *Joseph Delaney: On the Move* (2018), and *Beauford Delaney & James Baldwin: Through the Unusual Door* (2020). The KMA owns the world's largest and most comprehensive institutional collection of Beauford Delaney's work, and an extensive selection of paintings and drawings by Joseph Delaney.

Charles Griffin Farr grew up in Knoxville, but left for New York by 1931 and eventually settled in San Francisco. There, he enjoyed a long career as an influential art instructor and devoted realist painter during an era in which abstraction dominated the art world. A young **Charles Rain** left Knoxville for Nebraska with his mother after his parents divorced and never returned. He studied in Europe before moving to New York, where he established himself as a magic realist painter of extraordinary skill and vision. Knoxville native **Edward Hurst** was an art prodigy who pursued art training with George Luks at New York's renowned Art Students League even before graduating from high school. Although Hurst returned to Knoxville frequently to display his elegant society portraits and precisely crafted still lifes, he spent much of his life mingling with wealthy clientele near his studios in New York and London.



Beauford Delaney (Knoxville 1901-1979 Paris)

***Abstraction #12*, 1963**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2018 purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve, Ann & Steve Bailey in honor of Rachael Patterson Young, Natalie & Jim Haslam in honor of Lindsay Young, Molly & Bob Joy, the KMA Collectors Circle, The Knoxville (TN) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, Daniel McGehee, Marty Begalla, Nancy & Charles Wagner III, June & Rob Heller, Sandi Burdick & Tom Boyd, the Guild of the Knoxville Museum of Art, Debbie & Ron Watkins, Emerson Automation Solutions, John Z.C. Thomas, Richard Jansen, John Cotham, Monica Crane & Luke Madigan, Susan & Kent Farris, Lane Hays, Sylvia & Jan Peters, Patricia & Alan Rutenberg, Barbara & Steve Apking, Pam & Jeff Peters, Ebbie & Ronald Sandberg, Barbara & Bernie Bernstein, Mardel Fehrenbach, Karen & Reinhold Mann, Penny Lynch & Kimbro McGuire, David Butler & Ted Smith, Home Federal Bank, Knoxville Airport Authority, Avice & Gary Reid, Jonida & Theotis Robinson, Mimi & Milton Turner, Kitsy & Lou Hartley, Diane Humphreys-Barlow & Jack Barlow, Debbie & Jimmy Jones, Merikay Waldvogel & Jerry Ledbetter, Meredith & Mark Overholt, Chris Powell, Alexandra Rosen & Donald Cooney, Sandy & Frank Steer, Donna & Terry Wertz, Jackie Wilson, Pat & Geoff Wolpert, Marie & Bob Alcorn, Susan & Jeff Arbital, Ursula Bailey, Janda & Adolphus Brown, Linda and John Haines, Alane and Jan Houston Hickman, Sandy & John Lucas, Venice Peeke, Dorothy & Caesar Stair, Brenda & Larry Thompson, Twuanna & Derick Ward, Gwen & Sam McKenzie, Wokie Massaquoi-Wicks & Stephen Wicks, Elnora & Erven Williams, Brenda Anderson, Evelyn Davidson, Gloria Deathridge, Kathy & Jack Gotcher, Denise DuBose & Francis Lloyd, Falen & Clark Gillespie, DeLena Feliciano, Anna Fraser & Douglas Goode, and Georgia & William Pace

Although closely identified with the color yellow, Beauford Delaney also loved red. Once when his mother Delia made up his bed with a bright red spread the artist later confessed that the color “excited him so much that he couldn’t sleep all night.” This vivid composition consists of layers of color applied in lyrical interlocking patterns. Of Delaney’s early 1960s abstractions close friend and fellow painter Paul Jenkins wrote, “The structure was there in each painting but one sensed more of a veil than a grid. It was as if he had cut hundreds of flowers and crushed them. Stems and all.”



Beauford Delaney (Knoxville 1901-1979 Paris)

Scattered Light, 1964

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2015 purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve

This painting's descriptive title embodies a prevailing theme in Beauford Delaney's mature work: the union of light and movement. The artist's interest in this theme was sparked by the natural surroundings of his suburban studio at Clamart, and it persisted well after he moved back to central Paris. In this composition, minute dabs of contrasting color make up a vibrant visual field reminiscent of flickering pixels on a digital screen.



Beauford Delaney (Knoxville 1901-1979 Paris)

Blue-Light Abstraction, circa 1962

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2018 purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve, Ann & Steve Bailey in honor of Rachael Patterson Young, Natalie & Jim Haslam in honor of Lindsay Young, Molly & Bob Joy, the KMA Collectors Circle, The Knoxville (TN) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, Daniel McGehee, Marty Begalla, Nancy & Charles Wagner III, June & Rob Heller, Sandi Burdick & Tom Boyd, the Guild of the Knoxville Museum of Art, Debbie & Ron Watkins, Emerson Automation Solutions, John Z.C. Thomas, Richard Jansen, John Cotham, Monica Crane & Luke Madigan, Susan & Kent Farris, Lane Hays, Sylvia & Jan Peters, Patricia & Alan Rutenberg, Barbara & Steve Apking, Pam & Jeff Peters, Ebbie & Ronald Sandberg, Barbara & Bernie Bernstein, Mardel Fehrenbach, Karen & Reinhold Mann, Penny Lynch & Kimbro McGuire, David Butler & Ted Smith, Home Federal Bank, Knoxville Airport Authority, Avice & Gary Reid, Jonida & Theotis Robinson, Mimi & Milton Turner, Kitsy & Lou Hartley, Diane Humphreys-Barlow & Jack Barlow, Debbie & Jimmy Jones, Merikay Waldvogel & Jerry Ledbetter, Meredith & Mark Overholt, Chris Powell, Alexandra Rosen & Donald Cooney, Sandy & Frank Steer, Donna & Terry Wertz, Jackie Wilson, Pat & Geoff Wolpert, Marie & Bob Alcorn, Susan & Jeff Arbital, Ursula Bailey, Janda & Adolphus Brown, Linda and John Haines, Alane and Jan Houston Hickman, Sandy & John Lucas, Venice Peeke, Dorothy & Caesar Stair, Brenda & Larry Thompson, Twuanna & Derick Ward, Gwen & Sam McKenzie, Wokie Massaquoi-Wicks & Stephen Wicks, Elnora & Erven Williams, Brenda Anderson, Evelyn Davidson, Gloria Deathridge, Kathy & Jack Gotcher, Denise DuBose & Francis Lloyd, Falen & Clark Gillespie, DeLena Feliciano, Anna Fraser & Douglas Goode, and Georgia & William Pace

Beauford Delaney often looked to reflective surfaces in his immediate environment for inspiration. The undulating contours in this and other abstract works of the period bear a striking resemblance to “caustic networks” of light that form within or across undulating bodies of water. Such aquatic references may represent Delaney’s recollections of a traumatic experience while on vacation when in seeking to end his own life he jumped off of a boat into the ocean off Patras, Greece before being rescued by a nearby fisherman.



Beauford Delaney (Knoxville 1901-1979 Paris)

Self-Portrait in a Paris Bath House, 1971

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2018 purchase with funds provided by the Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve, Ann & Steve Bailey in honor of Rachael Patterson Young, Natalie & Jim Haslam in honor of Lindsay Young, Molly & Bob Joy, the KMA Collectors Circle, The Knoxville (TN) Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, Daniel McGehee, Marty Begalla, Nancy & Charles Wagner III, June & Rob Heller, Sandi Burdick & Tom Boyd, the Guild of the Knoxville Museum of Art, Debbie & Ron Watkins, Emerson Automation Solutions, John Z.C. Thomas, Richard Jansen, John Cotham, Monica Crane & Luke Madigan, Susan & Kent Farris, Lane Hays, Sylvia & Jan Peters, Patricia & Alan Rutenberg, Barbara & Steve Apking, Pam & Jeff Peters, Ebbie & Ronald Sandberg, Barbara & Bernie Bernstein, Mardel Fehrenbach, Karen & Reinhold Mann, Penny Lynch & Kimbro McGuire, David Butler & Ted Smith, Home Federal Bank, Knoxville Airport Authority, Avice & Gary Reid, Jonida & Theotis Robinson, Mimi & Milton Turner, Kitsy & Lou Hartley, Diane Humphreys-Barlow & Jack Barlow, Debbie & Jimmy Jones, Merikay Waldvogel & Jerry Ledbetter, Meredith & Mark Overholt, Chris Powell, Alexandra Rosen & Donald Cooney, Sandy & Frank Steer, Donna & Terry Wertz, Jackie Wilson, Pat & Geoff Wolpert, Marie & Bob Alcorn, Susan & Jeff Arbital, Ursula Bailey, Janda & Adolphus Brown, Linda and John Haines, Alane and Jan Houston Hickman, Sandy & John Lucas, Venice Peeke, Dorothy & Caesar Stair, Brenda & Larry Thompson, Twuanna & Derick Ward, Gwen & Sam McKenzie, Wokie Massaquoi-Wicks & Stephen Wicks, Elnora & Erven Williams, Brenda Anderson, Evelyn Davidson, Gloria Deathridge, Kathy & Jack Gotcher, Denise DuBose & Francis Lloyd, Falen & Clark Gillespie, DeLena Feliciano, Anna Fraser & Douglas Goode, and Georgia & William Pace

In this enigmatic and unusually descriptive Beauford Delaney painting--his last known self-portrait--the then-70-year-old artist portrays himself as youthfully adorned in African attire not unlike that of a Maasai warrior. His ebony silhouette stands out against the luminous surroundings, which include hieroglyphic wall motifs perhaps inspired by bath house interior decor. It is the only known self-portrait canvas in which Delaney presents himself full-figure.



Joseph Delaney (Knoxville 1904-1991 Knoxville)

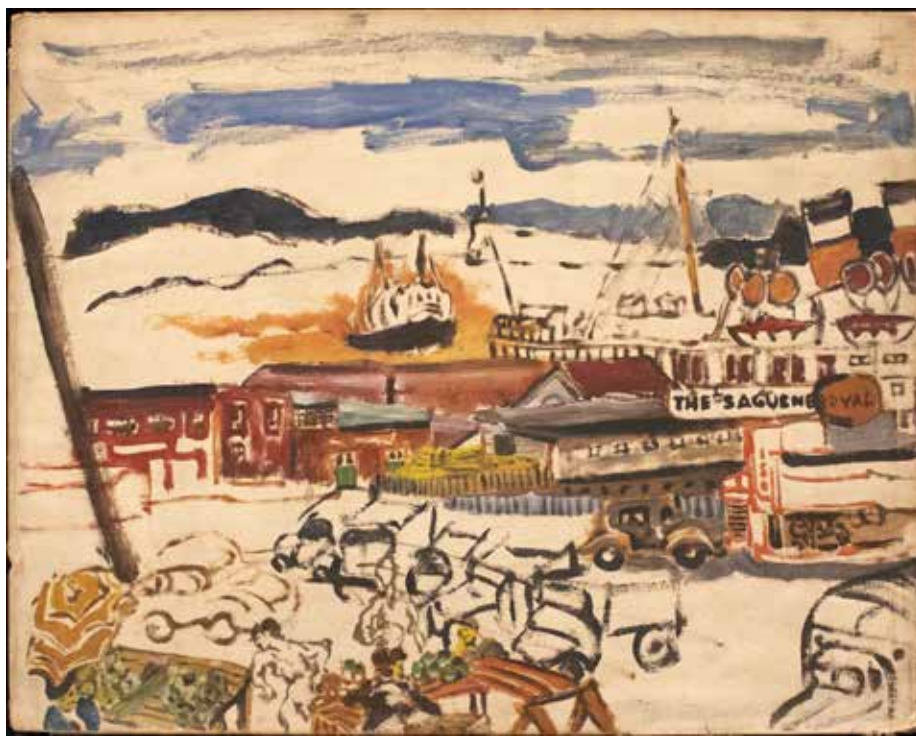
Sunday School Lesson, circa 1942

Sepia tone with gouache, pen, and ink on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2020 purchase with funds provided by KMA Collectors Circle

After leaving Knoxville as a young adult, Joseph Delaney eventually settled in New York City where he became a tireless and prolific painter of Manhattan's urban scene. Over the span of his 60-year career, Joseph displayed a remarkable ability to convey a vibrant modern world in transition while representing an unvarnished record of his energetic painterly process. He returned to Knoxville to visit his family over the years and eventually moved back to his hometown in 1986.

Sunday School Lesson is one of only a handful of narrative watercolors in which Delaney appears to depict moments from his childhood, circa 1910. These watercolors were produced in the early 1940s, years after he had settled in New York City, and may be related to an unpublished biographical sketch Delaney penned in 1952 as a tribute to his father, The Rev. John Samuel Delaney, who served as a circuit preacher in East Tennessee and Western Virginia between 1905 and 1915. In this scene, a group of boys, two of whom perhaps represent Delaney and his older brother Beauford, are scolded by a stern church matron. The drawing was included in the KMA's 2018 exhibition, *Joseph Delaney: On the Move*.



Joseph Delaney (Knoxville 1904-1991 Knoxville)

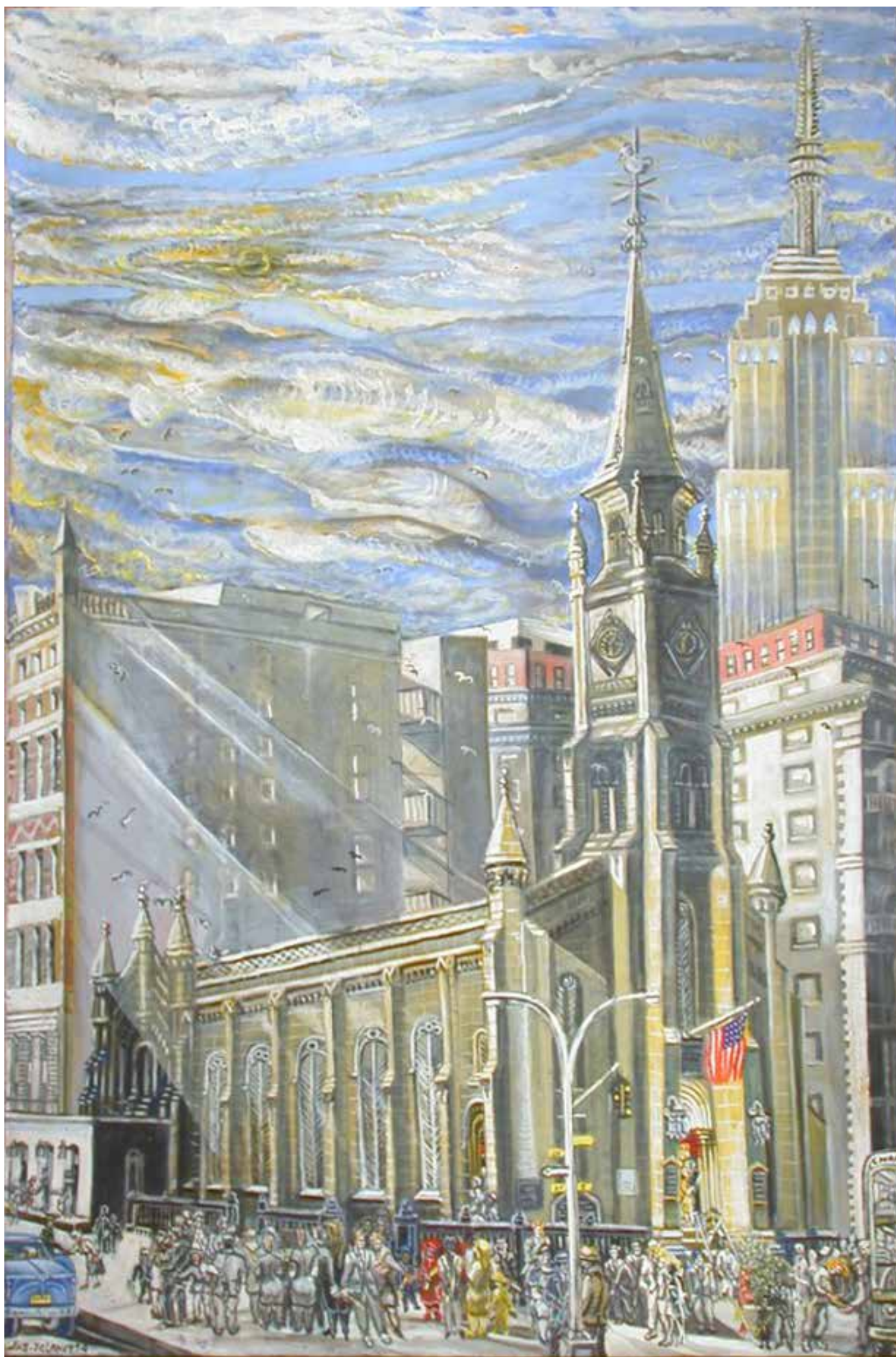
Untitled (Saguenay, Quebec), circa 1945

Oil on canvas board

Knoxville Museum of Art, gift of Tom Pair in memory of Joseph Delaney

Restless by nature, Joseph Delaney left Knoxville and lived a vagabond's life during much of the 1920s. He worked odd jobs and slept on the train or in hobo camps. By 1930, he had made his way to New York and pursued training with esteemed Regionalist painter Thomas Hart Benton at the Art Students League alongside a group of classmates that included famed Abstract Expressionist painter Jackson Pollock. Delaney began earning much-needed income and gaining exposure as a self-professed street "sketch artist," rendering his subjects in lively fashion using quick contours. He eventually established a studio practice in Manhattan, where he became known as a tireless and prolific painter of the local urban scene. Over the span of his 60-year career, Delaney displayed a remarkable ability to express the city's vitality using bold spontaneous brushwork without sacrificing narrative content.

Although Delaney was known for his scenes of urban life in lower Manhattan, this painting depicts Saguenay, Quebec, Canada. In the foreground, neatly arranged vehicles surround a small market. A Canada Steamship Lines luxury vessel appears moored in the distance. This early example of Delaney's work is noteworthy in that it already contains many of the stylistic traits and subjects for which the artist would become known years later: dense public gatherings, loose brushwork, and a juxtaposition of carefully described and unfinished passages.



Joseph Delaney (Knoxville 1904-1991 Knoxville)

Marble Collegiate Church, 1974-75

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 1990 gift of the artist



Joseph Delaney (Knoxville 1904-1991 Knoxville)

***Vine and Central, Knoxville, Tennessee*, 1940**

Oil, pastel, and charcoal on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2018 purchase with funds provided by KMA Collectors Circle, Rachael Patterson Young Art Acquisition Reserve, Nancy and Charlie Wagner, and Richard Jansen

The son of a circuit preacher, Joseph Delaney and his family were on the move across East Tennessee almost constantly during his early childhood. They finally settled near Knoxville's Vine and Central intersection in an ethnically diverse, densely packed and lively neighborhood (largely erased as part of the city's urban renewal projects of the 1960s). Littered with taverns and bordellos, it was a place in which the segregated town's races and classes rubbed shoulders.

Restless by nature, Joseph Delaney left Knoxville and lived a vagabond's life during much of the 1920s. He worked odd jobs and slept on the train or in hobo camps. By 1930, he had made his way to New York and pursued training with esteemed Regionalist painter Thomas Hart Benton at the Art Students League alongside a group of classmates that included famed Abstract Expressionist painter Jackson Pollock. Delaney began earning much-needed income and gaining exposure as a self-professed street "sketch artist," rendering his subjects in lively fashion using quick contours. He eventually established a studio practice in Manhattan, where he became known as a tireless and prolific painter of the local urban scene. Over the span of his 60-year career, Delaney displayed a remarkable ability to express the city's vitality using bold spontaneous brushwork without sacrificing narrative content.

Painted while the artist was living in Manhattan, *Vine and Central, Knoxville, Tennessee* represents Delaney's fond recollection of the bustling intersection near his childhood home. The festive parade scene features an integrated crowd gathered to watch minstrels from the Al G. Field troupe as they perform outside H. Bloom & Co., a grocery store located at 144 S. Central Street that was in operation from the late nineteenth century until around 1935. In 1986, Delaney moved back to Knoxville, where he served as artist-in-residence at University of Tennessee until his death in 1991.



Joseph Delaney (Knoxville 1904-1991 Knoxville)

***Macy's Day Parade*, 1974-84**

Acrylic and pastel on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 1990 gift of the artist

This parade painting illustrates Delaney's ability to infuse even his largest and most complex compositions with the immediacy of a drawing sketched on location. The artist began this painting by drawing directly onto bare canvas, in this case using colorful pastel outlines that he left visible. Vibrant color, more prominent in his later paintings, is applied in brushwork that fluctuates between carefully described passages and abstract dashes of pigment. The resulting effect lends visual energy to the festive depiction of this annual parade as it makes its way along Broadway just south of Herald Square.



Charles Griffin Farr (Birmingham, Alabama 1908-1997 San Francisco)

***Street in Knoxville*, 1947**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2021 purchase with funds provided by Nancy and Charlie Wagner.



Charles Griffin Farr (Birmingham, Alabama 1908-1997 San Francisco)

***The Cocktail Hour*, 1990**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2021 purchase with funds provided by Nancy and Charlie Wagner.

Farr was a devoted realist painter who achieved recognition for his precise landscapes, still lifes and figure studies during the mid-twentieth century, a time when abstract painting was in vogue. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Farr spent much of his youth in Knoxville before settling in San Francisco. Farr's paintings are intended to convey a subtle emotional tension and sense of mystery. Like Charles Rain, Farr was often referred to as a "magic realist" for his bright, clear views of a flawless, apparently vacuum-sealed world. Farr himself defined his work as trying "to make things more real than they already were."

Street in Knoxville depicts an undetermined location in the artist's childhood hometown. The presence of Bell Laundry, a small chain active in Knoxville until 1928, indicates Farr painted it from memory roughly twenty years after moving from Knoxville. *The Cocktail Hour*, on the other hand, represents a specific location: the dining room of Farr's San Francisco apartment on De Haro Street near 19th Street in Potrero Hill. The identity of Farr's model is unknown.



Charles Rain (Knoxville 1911-1985 New York)

***Eclipse*, 1946**

Oil on board

Anonymous loan

Born in Knoxville, Charles Rain moved to Nebraska as a child and discovered an early love of art. He traveled to Europe frequently and was deeply influenced by Italian Renaissance painters. He especially admired Agnolo Bronzino (1503-1572), who used glazing and under-painting techniques to create works in which brushwork is nearly invisible. Rain adopted a similar technique, and often used brushes with only two or three bristles.



Charles Rain (Knoxville 1911-1985 New York)

***Etruscan Still Life*, 1968**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2012 bequest of Henry W. Grady, Jr.

So called “magic realist” Charles Rain produced his meticulous, haunting scenes using tiny brushes. Even a small painting could take as long as six months to one year to complete. As in *Etruscan Still Life*, his subjects often include an assortment of objects—many of which the artist collected while traveling abroad—arranged in strange, eerily-lit groupings. Rather than telling a specific story, Rain preferred that viewers interpret his enigmatic compositions in their own way.

Post-War Revival

By the late 1940s, a rebellious generation of young artists devised a bold new approach to painting—Abstract Expressionism—that became the leading international style. The highly spontaneous method fulfilled artists' desire to express the human condition beyond the visible world in a visual language that was intuitive and unhindered. The style took hold in East Tennessee during the early 1950s shortly after the arrival of **C. Kermit "Buck" Ewing** as the first head of the University of Tennessee's art department. He recruited a group of progressive artists—most notably **Carl Sublett, Walter Stevens,** and **Robert Birdwell**—who exhibited actively in Knoxville as well as other cities throughout the Southeast. They proved highly influential as artists as well as teachers.

While Sublett and Stevens shared an exclusive interest in the landscape as a point of reference for their abstractions, Birdwell and Ewing often found inspiration in urban settings and the human figure. Sometimes they exhibited as a foursome and other times as the "Knoxville 7" with fellow painters **Joanne Higgs Ross, Richard Clarke,** and sculptor **Philip Nichols.** Each artist maintained an individual style and utilized varying degrees of abstraction. Together, they produced what are likely the first abstract works in Tennessee and helped establish a foothold for modern art in the region.

This period of cultural renewal accelerated as Knoxville gained a more secure economic footing. In 1961 the Knoxville Museum of Art's predecessor, the Dulin Gallery of Art, opened on Kingston Pike as the area's dedicated venue for the display and collection of fine art. The Dulin became known for its national works on paper competitions, and its set of nine early miniature rooms created by renowned miniaturist Mrs. James Ward Thorne (on display on ground floor).



C. Kermit "Buck" Ewing (Bentleyville, Pennsylvania
1910-1976 Bali, Indonesia)

***Landscape Redesigned*, 1943**

Oil on canvas

Knoxville Museum of Art, 1991 gift of Martin Hunt

Buck Ewing was a charismatic and influential voice for avant-garde art in East Tennessee during the mid-twentieth century. In 1948, the Pittsburgh native became the first head of the University of Tennessee's visual arts program. He was an outspoken champion of modern art who battled conservative attitudes he encountered on his arrival. Under his spirited leadership, UT's art program grew steadily and embraced progressive art ideas. In the 1950s, Ewing began exhibiting with a group of younger artists who would come to be known as the Knoxville 7. Under his leadership, the group was instrumental in generating broader exposure for the city as a vibrant center for modern art.

Ewing specialized in figurative and landscape paintings that reflect the broad and varied manner in which he explored Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art. He favored earthy tones, and often enhanced the surface texture of his paintings through the addition of sand, cement, and other materials. In addition to painting local subjects, the artist created many works inspired by his frequent travels abroad. This early work depicts abandoned urban streets, most likely those of Pittsburgh, in a manner reminiscent of famed American painter Edward Hopper (1882-1967).



Robert Birdwell (Knoxville 1924-2016 Knoxville)

***Two Blind Beggars*, 1952**

Etching on paper, 8/20

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2017 gift of Barbara and Bernard
Bernstein in memory of Robert Birdwell

For Robert Birdwell, downtown Knoxville was a favorite painting location. In some works, he interprets the city's features as colorful, interlocking geometric forms. In others, as in this early etching, his interest shifts to recording human activity. This work represents the artist's expressive rendering of a homeless Knoxville couple he frequently encountered while sketching downtown.



Carl Sublett (Johnson County, Kentucky 1919-2008
Union, Maine)

***Night Tree*, 1962**

Ink and watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2010 gift of the Sublett Family

Kentucky native Carl Sublett was a versatile, prolific artist who received art training at the University Study Center in Florence, Italy after serving in the army during World War II. He moved to Bristol, Tennessee, where he worked as an engineering draftsman, newspaper artist, assistant manager of an engraving firm, and as a freelance artist. He came to Knoxville in 1954 to become art director for the advertising firm of Charles S. Kane Co. After taking an evening art class with Buck Ewing at the University of Tennessee, Sublett was soon recruited by Ewing as an assistant painting instructor and shortly thereafter became a founding member of the Knoxville 7.

Sublett found endless inspiration in East Tennessee's countryside, and along the Maine coastline near Port Clyde, where he spent most summers. Throughout his long career, he demonstrated a rare ability to shift effortlessly from cerebral abstractions to lyrical, realistic landscapes. His Knoxville 7-era paintings are exuberant celebrations of nature's energies reflected in richly textured pigments.



Walter Hollis Stevens (Mineola, New York 1927-1980 Deer Isle, Maine)

***Storm Shore*, 1965**

Watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2008 gift of Stuart Worden in memory of Betsy Worden

Along with Sublett and C. Kermit “Buck” Ewing, Walter “Holly” Stevens was one of the first faculty members of the University of Tennessee’s art department and a core member of the Knoxville 7. Stevens and fellow artist Carl Sublett often set up their easels in local marble quarries, and spent most summers painting along the Maine coastline, either near Sublett’s summer home at Port Clyde, or Stevens’ summer home in Deer Isle. Both artists used these natural landscapes as inspiration for bold experiments with color and form devoid of human presence or site-specific details. This painting typifies Stevens’ ability to reduce the natural environment into dynamic arrangements of interlocking color shapes designed to express the interaction of sea, land, and sky.



Richard Clarke (Noblesville, Indiana 1923-1997
Knoxville)

***Untitled (Rainstorm)*, 1966**

Watercolor on paper

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2007 gift of the Ewing family in memory
of Mary and C. Kermit "Buck" Ewing

Although Richard Clarke joined the University of Tennessee's art faculty as early as 1956, he did not begin exhibiting with the Knoxville 7 until 1960. Active as a printmaker and a painter, he produced both oil and watercolor paintings before shifting exclusively to watercolors by the early 1960s. He specialized in local landscape scenes rendered in varying degrees of abstraction using a broad range of marks laid down in broad transparent washes. Clarke often painted out of doors, and the Maine coast and a marble quarry in Friendsville, Tennessee were among his favorite locations.



Philip Nichols (Freeborn County, Minnesota 1931-2019
Knoxville)

Form in Steel, 1963

Welded steel

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2010 gift of the Sublett Family

Philip Nichols was a veteran Knoxville artist known for his welded steel sculptures resembling architectural structures or mechanical forms designed for an unknown purpose. He came to Knoxville in 1961 from Michigan to become the first sculptor appointed to the University of Tennessee art faculty and the seventh and final member of the Knoxville 7. Nichols' intricate steel forms served as a fitting sculptural counterpart to the largely abstract canvases produced by other Knoxville 7 members.

Form in Steel is a very early example of Nichols' sculpture, and was produced in his makeshift campus studio on 16th Street only a year or two after his arrival in Knoxville. Using skills honed through years of working as an industrial welder, he fused dozens of small steel panels into a cubist-inspired structure resembling a pair of conjoined, faceted figures. It is one of the only known sculptures by Nichols from the 1960s, before he began working in stainless steel for its durability and brilliant finish. An example of Nichols' stainless steel work, *Receptor* (1977), is on view in the KMA's South Garden.



Marion Greenwood (Brooklyn 1909-1970 Woodstock, New York)

The History of Tennessee, 1954-55

Oil on linen

Courtesy of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Introduction

During a career that spanned forty years, New York artist Marion Greenwood created paintings, drawings, and prints that championed the lives of indigenous people she encountered during travels to Haiti, India, Africa, Mexico, and other far-flung locales. In 1954, she came to Knoxville when the University of Tennessee commissioned her to create a mural for the new Carolyn P. Brown University Center ballroom. The resulting work, *The History of Tennessee*, stands as East Tennessee's largest, most important, and most controversial figural mural painting. Greenwood was selected by a search committee headed by art department chairman C. Kermit "Buck" Ewing, and was offered a one-year teaching assignment as well. After considering many themes for the mural, Greenwood decided her work would pay tribute to the state's musical heritage. She worked on the mural largely at night, and recruited university students and faculty as models for many of the 28 figures that would be featured in the completed work. By day, Greenwood taught art and traveled across the state to get ideas for the mural, visiting moonshine suppliers in the east and dockworkers in the west.



The “Singing Mural” Narrative

Painted on a continuous 30-foot length of canvas, Greenwood’s composition illustrates the distinctive music of the state’s main divisions—the delta blues of West Tennessee, country music of Middle Tennessee, and religious music of East Tennessee. On the left, Memphis Beale Street jazz musicians play for dancers on a background of riverboats and the booming cotton industry. To their right, a fieldworker sings to a young girl as he rests with his cotton sack. In Middle Tennessee, a country square dance takes place in a barn amid bundles of drying tobacco and stalks of sorghum. Continuing to the right, the mural depicts East Tennessee basket weaving and cotton spinning. A young boy plays the harmonica while a mother covers her child with a homemade quilt. At the end of the mural, surrounded by mountain laurel and rhododendron, a group sings hymns in front of a clapboard church.

The completed “Singing Mural,” as it was commonly known, was unveiled in the University Center’s ballroom on June 5, 1955 before a commencement crowd of 300 or so people. Records indicate it was well received by university representatives, and Greenwood considered it to be her best work in the United States. The mural remained on view for 15 years without objection. During those years, however, former UT president Andy Holt found it to be a distracting backdrop for his speeches, and had a curtain placed in front of the mural before each of his addresses.



Vandalism, Controversy, and Covering the Mural

Greenwood's decision to include African Americans in a mural dedicated to the history of Tennessee was a progressive and daring move during the 1950s Jim Crow era. However, the world changed rapidly in the following two decades and what was almost certainly a bold insistence on diversity and inclusion came to be seen as something quite different by a new generation. By the 1970s, amid the political unrest sweeping through American colleges and universities, Greenwood's mural came to be regarded as a blatant symbol of racism by many students in UT's civil rights organizations. As the only work of art on campus depicting people of color, its images of what appeared to be happy black folk singing and playing jazz instruments were seen as a sharp reminder of Jim Crow and a blow to African-American dignity and self-worth.

In the course of student unrest in the spring of 1970, the mural was vandalized by unknown parties. The painting was restored, and kept under guard. Responding to the threat of vandalism and growing criticism about the depiction of African-Americans in the mural, in 1972 a wall was built in front of it and *The History of Tennessee* disappeared from public view for more than three decades.



Uncovering and Restoration

Although it was hidden away for a generation, Greenwood's mural and the controversy surrounding it were never completely forgotten. In 2006, following a successful two-year effort by a team of UT students and administrators, the mural was uncovered for public viewing for the first time in several decades. In 2008, planning began for a new, larger student center on campus, and by 2010 it was announced that the Carolyn P. Brown Memorial University Center would be razed. Discussions ensued about safely removing Greenwood's mural, and identifying a location for its long-term display. In 2013, a national conservation firm was hired to clean the mural, remove it from the cinderblock wall of the University Center, and place it on a special apparatus designed to store the mural safely until a permanent home could be identified.

Since the new university center design contained no suitable space for the mural, administrators explored off-campus display options and approached the KMA as an ideal venue. In 2014, shortly after the mural was featured in a special display at the University's Downtown Gallery, the university and the KMA reached an agreement through which the university retains ownership of the mural, but has placed it in the KMA's care on long-term loan. This insures that visitors for years to come will have access to the mural and can assess its history, significance, and meaning, and view it in the context of contemporary artistic developments in Knoxville and the region.



The Artist

Greenwood was born in Brooklyn on April 6, 1909. Considered a child prodigy, she left high school at 15 after winning a scholarship to study at New York's Art Students League, which at that time was one of the most progressive art schools in America. One of her mentors at the league was John Sloan, whose paintings of city scenes reflected his belief that daily life should inspire works of art.

Greenwood traveled to the Southwest to study and to paint pictures of the local Native Americans. From there, in 1932, she went to Mexico, where she began to paint murals depicting the life of everyday people. Diego Rivera, head of the Mexican government's mural program, noticed her work and hired her to work on a massive mural project in the center of Mexico City. Greenwood's section of that mural, a militant depiction of the exploitation of rural agricultural workers, was widely admired throughout Mexico, and she became something of a local icon. Back in the United States, Greenwood received several New Deal commissions, among them a mural for a post office in Crossville, Tennessee, that endorsed the Tennessee Valley Authority, and *Blueprint for Living* (1940), frescos (since painted over) for a housing project in Brooklyn, New York.



Although Greenwood had largely abandoned murals for easel painting by 1945, her themes remained the same. As she explained in a *New York World Telegram* article in November 1944, her interest was not in “fussing with cute and fancy nudes and pretty-pretty things,” but rather in depicting “the life of America, whether it be industry, farming or just plain people.” Greenwood did paint two murals after the war: the first, *The History of Tennessee* (1954-55); the second, *Tribute to Women* (1965), created at Syracuse University, was dedicated to women throughout the world.

Greenwood’s work earned her many honors and awards, including second prize at the Carnegie Institute exhibition of 1944 for the painting *Mississippi Girl* (1943); the National Association of Women Artists’ Grumbacker Prize (1959); and election to the National Academy of Design (1959). She spent the last decades of her life primarily in New York City and at an art colony in Woodstock, New York. Greenwood died in 1970 from injuries suffered in an automobile accident.

The KMA wishes to acknowledge Fred Moffatt, Jack Neely, and Greenwood biographer Carol Kort for providing the source material for this text.

Danny Lyon: *Knoxville, 1967*

Danny Lyon is considered one of America's most original and influential documentary photographers, and is known for the extraordinary lengths to which he goes to immerse himself in his subject. He was jailed while marching against segregation during the civil rights movement, rode with the notorious Chicago Outlaws as a full-fledged member for a year, and spent fourteen months photographing life on death row inside the Texas prison system. His goal, he said, was "to destroy Life magazine"—to present powerful, authentic alternatives to the hollow pictures and stories permeating mass media in America.

These photographs stem from Lyon's brief stopover in Knoxville in late August of 1967 in order to visit the childhood home of writer James Agee. He admired Agee's brutally candid and descriptive work, especially his collaboration with photographer Walker Evans in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. As Lyon explained, "Agee's writing had a more profound effect on me at the time than Evans's photographs... Agee had an unshakeable belief in documentary photography and film as a powerful instrument of truth."

When Lyon arrived at the location of Agee's home near the intersection of Highland Avenue and 15th Street in the Fort Sanders neighborhood, he was dismayed to find that the writer's residence had been demolished and replaced by the James Agee Apartments, which he described as "like some kind of perverse tombstone for this great man." Instead of getting back in his car and driving on to Galveston, Lyon was compelled to stay and explore Agee's hometown. He photographed the streets of Fort Sanders, downtown Knoxville, carnival workers ("carnies") at the Tennessee Valley Fair, and a local drag strip. Lyon was so inspired he made a journal entry explaining that "I have photographed every day and every day done more...by Labor Day weekend I had exposed 14 rolls of 35 mm Tri-X...the most I've done in such a short period (five days)."

Lyon's images offer a compelling and candid view of a Southern city during a time of social and economic unrest, and attest to his ability to become an insider in any setting he encountered. The gelatin silver prints on view were produced by Lyon and printer Chuck Kelton as part of a one-of-a-kind portfolio made especially for the Knoxville Museum of Art's collection. As Lyon observed, "It's been a long time. I am glad these pictures have come home."



Danny Lyon (Brooklyn 1942; lives and works in New Mexico)

Untitled (Young Mechanic), Knoxville, 1967

Gelatin silver print from a unique Knoxville 1967 portfolio printed by the artist for the KMA, 2014

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2014 purchase with funds provided by Hei and Stanley Park



Danny Lyon (Brooklyn 1942; lives and works in New Mexico)

The Harris Family inside the Lonsdale Projects, Knoxville, 1967

Gelatin silver print from a unique Knoxville 1967

portfolio printed by the artist for the KMA, 2014

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2014 purchase with funds provided by Diane Humphreys-Barlow and Jack Barlow



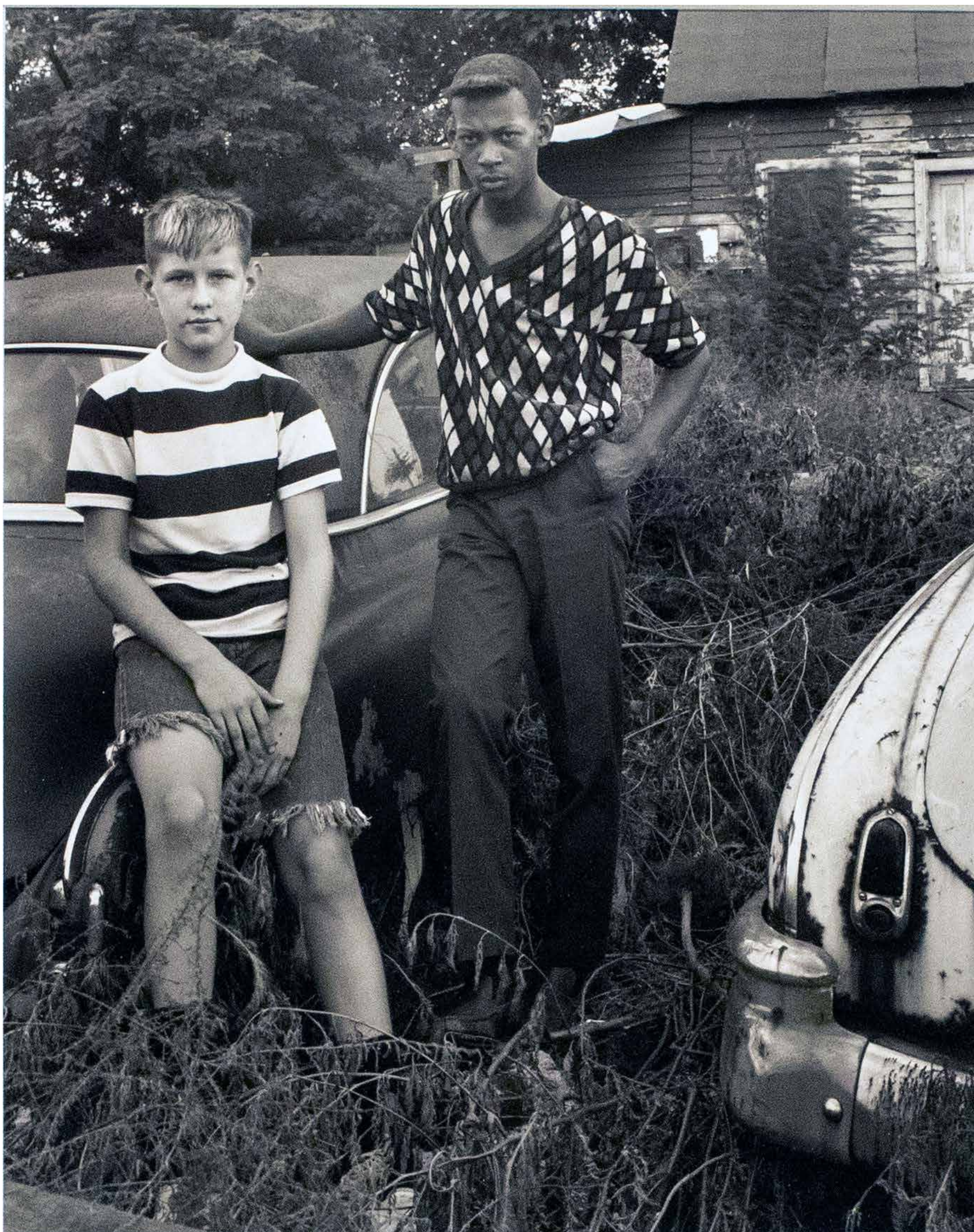
Danny Lyon (Brooklyn 1942; lives and works in New Mexico)

Gay Street, Knoxville, 1967

Gelatin silver print from a unique Knoxville 1967

portfolio printed by the artist for the KMA, 2014

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2014 purchase



Danny Lyon (Brooklyn 1942; lives and works in New Mexico)

Untitled, Knoxville, 1967

Gelatin silver print from a unique *Knoxville 1967*

portfolio printed by the artist for the KMA, 2014

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2014 purchase with funds provided by Sheena McCall



Bessie Harvey (Dallas, Georgia 1929-1994 Alcoa, Tennessee)

African Totem, circa 1988

Painted wood, wood putty, feathers, shells, metal, plastic, and found objects

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2012 gift of Glady and Ross Faires

Bessie Harvey is considered by many as an important American visionary and outsider artist-someone who develops a body of work outside the mainstream of art schools, art galleries, and museums. The Alcoa, Tennessee-based artist used her work as a powerful means of exploring spirituality, religion, segregation, slavery, and various narrative dramas in which her root characters often act out stories drawn from history.

African Totem reflects Harvey's interest in Africa as an ancestral home and a source of endless spiritual and artistic energy. It also illustrates her ability to compose large, complex sculptures in the round using a wide variety of media and found objects.



Bessie Harvey (Dallas, Georgia 1929-1994 Alcoa, Tennessee)

Seven Sisters of the World, late 1980s

Mixed media on wood

Knoxville Museum of Art, 2004 gift of Glady and Ross Faires

Bessie Harvey, one of East Tennessee's most heralded self-taught artists, is noted for her magical ability to extract historical and imaginary characters from gnarled roots, branches, paint, and cloth. Many of the artist's creations celebrate the deeds of biblical heroes, or recount compelling chapters in African American history. Although her works often present themes of adversity and struggle, each contains an underlying message of human perseverance and divine compassion. In this work Harvey celebrates feminine power and beauty in cultures worldwide.

Unlike many sculptors who chisel away wood or stone to create their works, Harvey used a process that was almost exclusively additive. As she pointed out, "I don't carve, they already shaped." With the exception of drilling an occasional set of eyeholes, the artist would only paint and embellish with glue, beads, yarn and cloth.

