



George Ault (American, 1891–1948), *Autumn Hillside*, 1940, Gouache on paper

—— THE HISTORIC ——
**WOODSTOCK
ART COLONY**

The Arthur A. Anderson Collection

 **New York State
Museum** WEST GALLERY | NOVEMBER 10, 2018 – DECEMBER 31, 2019

COLLECTOR'S STATEMENT

Growing up in western Michigan, I was a collector of minerals, reptiles, and stamps, the last from old albums that belonged to my grandfather. My first interest in art can be traced to a small painting I discovered as a teenager in our cottage storeroom, and which my mother gave to me as a youngster. The painting is attributed to the 17th century Italian artist Salvator Rosa, whose works inspired Thomas Cole, father of the Hudson River School. Later, as a young adult I was captivated by a painting of a beautiful woman with red lips by the Woodstock artist Norbert Heermann, a friend of George Bellows. Together, these two works sparked in me a passion for art—and eventually the artists and art of the historic Woodstock Art Colony.

I always enjoyed lending pieces to museums for exhibition and having them used. The question eventually became: “Where can my collection reside in perpetuity and be best cared for, used, and appreciated?” In due course, it became clear to me that the best place for it was the New York State Museum in Albany. The collection's new home re-introduces the historic Woodstock Art Colony into the American art canon. It also, I hope, will motivate others to donate their treasures for public appreciation and education. I am absolutely delighted to have my collection of the culture and art of the Woodstock Art Colony join the extraordinary New York State Museum.

Arthur A. Anderson

THE HISTORIC WOODSTOCK ART COLONY THE ARTHUR A. ANDERSON COLLECTION

Long before the famous music festival in 1969, Woodstock, New York, was home to what is considered America's first intentionally created, year-round arts colony—founded in 1902 and still thriving over 100 years later. Collecting the remarkable range of work produced there has been Arthur A. Anderson's focus for three decades, resulting in the largest comprehensive assemblage of its type. The artists represented in it reflect the diversity of those who came to Woodstock, including Birge Harrison, Konrad Cramer, George Bellows, Eugene Speicher, Peggy Bacon, Rolph Scarlett, and Yasuo Kuniyoshi, among many others. Anderson recently donated his entire collection—some 1,500 objects by almost 200 artists—to the New York State Museum. This exhibition introduces to the public for the first time just a sample of the highlights of this extraordinary collection, which represents a body of work that together shaped art and culture in New York and forms a history of national and international significance.



Rudolph Wetterau (American, 1890–1953) and Margaret Wetterau (American, 20th century)
Map of Woodstock... Showing the location of some of the artists' homes, 1926
Ink on board

BYRDCLIFFE ARTS COLONY

In 1902 the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony was established in Woodstock. The year-round utopian community promoted the Arts and Crafts movement, which emphasized individual, hand-crafted work over mass production. Wealthy Englishman Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead and his wife, Jane Byrd McCall, along with writer Hervey White and artist Bolton Brown, founded the colony; its name was derived from the middle names of the Whiteheads, who financed the project.

Byrdcliffe drew artisans from across all media: furniture makers, painters, printmakers, photographers, metalworkers, weavers, ceramicists, and others, as well as writers and musicians. Classes were offered, and notable teachers included co-founder Bolton Brown, Hermann Dudley Murphy, Birge Harrison, and William Schumacher.

Byrdcliffe continues to flourish today under the auspices of the Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild.



Birge Harrison (American, 1854–1929)
St. Lawrence River Sunset, n.d.
Oil on canvas

MAVERICK ARTS COLONY

Hervey White left Byrdcliffe in 1904 and purchased a nearby farm to establish what would become the Maverick Arts Colony, a community more bohemian than Byrdcliffe. Early on, the colony attracted mostly writers and musicians, though by the 1920s visual artists of wide-ranging approaches had a large presence too. In 1910 White launched the Maverick Press, which published original literary and artistic material. A theater and concert hall also graced the grounds.

In 1915 White staged the first Maverick Festival, which would provide the main economic support for the colony. Held annually on the night of the August full moon, the festival featured music, dancing, food and drink, and attendees dressed in creative costumes. It is often seen as the forerunner to the famous Woodstock Music and Art Fair that was held in Bethel, New York, in 1969. Every summer Maverick Concerts still take place in the concert hall built by Hervey White in 1916.

Frank Swift Chase (American, 1886–1958)
Catskills at Woodstock, 1927
Oil on canvas

ART STUDENTS LEAGUE

In 1906 the Art Students League moved its summer school to Woodstock. The League had been founded in New York City in 1875 as an alternative to the mainstream National Academy of Design and had become one of the most important art schools in the country. From 1906 to 1922, and again from 1947 to 1979, the Art Students League brought as many as 200 students to the Woodstock area each year.

Birge Harrison taught at the summer school in Woodstock for its first five years. He had been the painting instructor at Byrdcliffe in 1904 and indeed there was much overlap of artists, both students and teachers, among the various organizations in Woodstock. As Harrison noted, “The desire is to develop a number of individual painters and not to develop a ‘school.’” Landscape was emphasized as much as the figurative tradition, and naturally, given the bucolic location, it became a focus for many artists working in Woodstock.

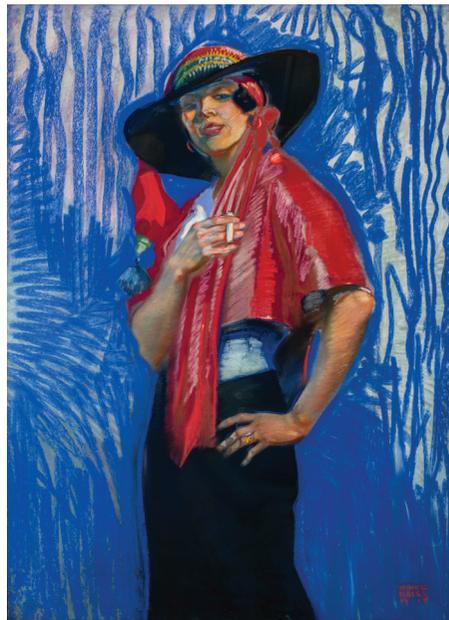


MODERNISM IN WOODSTOCK

Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Woodstock artists associated with the Art Students League and others worked in a variety of styles. Some favored Birge Harrison's subtle Tonalist approach; others, the painterly brushstrokes and light of Impressionism; and still others the jewel-like tones of the Post-Impressionist palette.

Works influenced by a number of European avant-garde movements also made their marks in Woodstock. Among those experimenting with varying degrees of abstraction were Konrad Cramer, Andrew Dasburg, and Henry Lee McFee, who were dubbed the Rock City Rebels after the part of Woodstock where they lived. Cramer, born in Germany, drew upon his experiences there with the radical art of *Der Blaue Reiter*, a group that used exaggerated forms and highly keyed colors to convey emotion. Dasburg had visited France, where he met Henri Matisse, who emphasized color for its own sake—a style called Fauvism. In Paris, Dasburg also studied the work of Paul Cézanne and Cubism, perhaps the most influential of all modernist approaches, based on fragmented images seen from different viewpoints. Elements of all these styles are not only seen in the work of the Rock City Rebels but in that of other Woodstock artists as well.

Artists of all stylistic bents came together to establish the Woodstock Artists Association in 1919, a much-needed venue for exhibitions that remains active today as the Woodstock Artists Association and Museum.

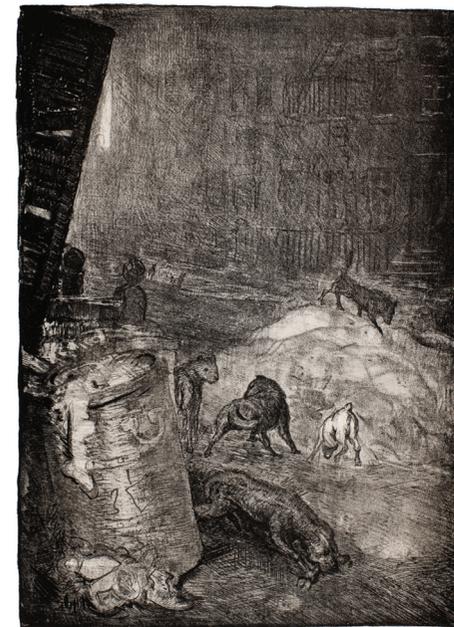


Winold Reiss (American, born Germany, 1886–1953)
Woman in Black Hat with Cigarette, 1917
Pastel on paper

GEORGE BELLOWS AND HIS CIRCLE

In 1920, at the invitation of Eugene Speicher, George Bellows spent his first summer in Woodstock. Bellows belonged to the Ashcan School, a loosely associated group of early 20th-century artists working in New York City who favored urban subjects, often gritty in nature. They painted in a realist style that was in contrast to the prevailing and popular academic approaches. Both Speicher and Bellows had studied with its leader, Robert Henri, in New York.

Bellows became in many respects the backbone of Arthur Anderson's collection and is richly represented by over 150 works, the most of any artist. His circle of artist friends in Woodstock included Speicher and Henri, as well as Leon Kroll, John Carroll, and Charles Rosen, among others.



George Bellows (American, 1882–1925)
Hungry Dogs, 1916
Lithograph



BOLTON BROWN AND LITHOGRAPHY

By 1915, Bolton Brown, a co-founder of Byrdcliffe, was immersed in lithography, a printmaking process using a stone plate. Although the process was invented at the end of the 18th century in Germany and used commercially and artistically throughout Europe and the United States in the 19th century, Brown is credited as the father of American lithography for his dedication to perfecting the medium scientifically and artistically. He experimented with and invented new processes, wrote on the subject, printed for other artists, and had an output of over 400 lithographs. His own work ranges in style and subject matter, exploiting the expressive possibilities of the process—from delicate, tonal landscapes to sharply delineated still lifes.

Bolton Brown (American, 1864–1936)
Choke Cherries, 1920
 Lithograph

1930s AND BEYOND

Although a wide range of artistic approaches in Woodstock continued in the 1930s, economic and social issues became more prevalent as subject matter with the onset of the Depression. Realism dominated much of the work, sometimes tinged with modernist elements, including abstraction. Various New Deal government programs—the Public Works of Art Project (1933–1934) and the Federal Art Project under the Works Progress Administration (1935–1943)—helped many Woodstock artists at this time. Some were commissioned to execute murals, others to produce prints, easel paintings, sculpture, posters, crafts, and more.

After World War II a new generation of artists arrived in Woodstock, joining those already established there. Along with the continued success of the earlier institutions, the return of the Art Students League Summer School (1947–1979) and annual events such as the Woodstock Art Conference (1947–1952) ensured the enduring vitality of the colony into the late 20th century to today.



Rolph Scarlett (American, born Canada, 1889–1984)
Abstract Composition, c. 1940
 Gouache on paper



Norbert Heermann (American, born Germany, 1891–1966)
Lady with Red Lips, c. 1940
Oil on canvas



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