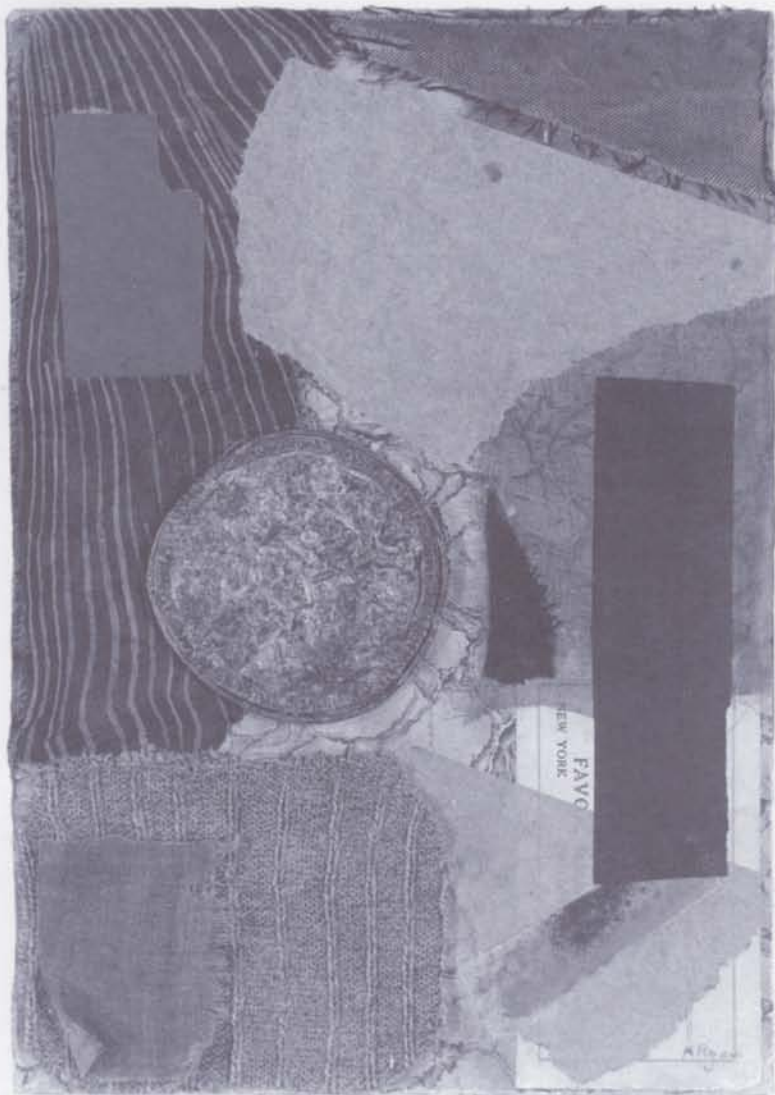


THE ART AND LIFE OF ANNE RYAN



ANDERSEN WINDOW GALLERY | WALKER ART CENTER | MAY 3 - AUGUST 24, 1997

“... SHE WAS A STRANGE AND MARVELOUS
MIXTURE OF MID-VICTORIAN
AND ULTRA MODERN.”

—ELIZABETH McFADDEN, 1979

The second Andersen Window Gallery installation focuses on Anne Ryan (1889–1954), an active member of the burgeoning New York art world of the 1940s and 1950s. Best known for her exquisitely executed collages (she produced nearly 400 during the last six years of her life), Ryan was well-versed in several media.

The Art and Life of Anne Ryan presents Ryan's poetry, printmaking, painting, and collages as well as work by her contemporaries and archival material from the Walker Art Center, the Papers of Anne Ryan, and the Douglass Morse Howell Estate to illustrate this exceptionally talented artist's place in the cultural history of the 20th century

THE RISE OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

During the years surrounding World War II, intellectuals and artists from Europe emigrated to the United States in large numbers. This, coupled with the outcome of the war, transferred the capital of the art world from Paris to New York. The Europeans' presence and artistic influence challenged a younger generation of American artists to reconsider their approach to art-making. Now known as the Abstract Expressionists, these artists sought individual expression in their work through abstract representations of the visible world.

Hans Hofmann, a painter and teacher from Germany and mentor to this new generation of artists, advised Ryan in 1938 “not to go to school, not to look at pictures, but to paint.” In the spring of 1951, more than 70 artists, including Willem de Kooning, Helen Frankenthaler*, Hans Hofmann (*Elegy*, on view here), Franz Kline*, Robert Motherwell*, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg*, Ad Reinhardt, Anne Ryan*, and Tony Smith participated in the self-organized *Ninth Street Show*. An enormous success, this historic exhibition marked the beginning of an era in which American art stole the spotlight of the international art world.



Anne Ryan's passport photo, circa 1931. Papers of Anne Ryan, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

THE MEDIUM OF COLLAGE

Collage as an artistic medium dates back to Indian and Persian miniatures, Russian icons, and 19th-century post-cards. In modern Western art, the Cubists began incorporating bits of newspaper and preprinted materials into their compositions as early as 1911

After World War I, Dada artists used fragments from commercial texts and photographs in their collages, often to make specific social and political comments. Kurt Schwitters, a German Dada artist, made works of art he called *merz* collages, utilizing debris from the streets.

According to Ryan's daughter, Elizabeth McFadden, her mother attended Schwitters' 1948 New York exhibition many times, studying his 26 collages “in a passion of delight. She knew instantly and completely that she had found her *métier*. We went home and before she put water on for supper, she was at her work table making collages.”

BLUE COLLAGE

THIS COLOR SPEAKS

IT IS A BLUE ENCLOSED IN MULTIPLE BLUE

AS A BIRD'S BLUE WING

CAUGHT UNFURLED AND BEATING IN THE FAR AIR

COLORS THE DAY

TOUCH, SEE, HEAR

THIS EDGE OF BLUE,

THIS TURN OF COLOR,

BLUE NOT CAPTURED BY THE EYES

BUT FELT

BLUE FROM A HIDDEN CAVE

LOCKED WITHIN AND KEPT

TO THIS DAY SPILL UPON THE CANVAS

IT IS THE BLUE

OF THE PIERCED ROCK, ALIVE AND ARCHED

OVER THE MOVING WATER.

Anne Ryan

PRINTMAKING: ATELIER 17

Through his work as an artist and instructor of printmaking, Stanley William Hayter was instrumental in promoting a growing interest in mechanical processes among a new generation of American artists. Hayter's ability to combine aspects of Surrealism and abstraction dictated the basis of his teaching style.

In 1940, he joined the growing population of European emigré artists in New York, where he reestablished his now-historic print workshop Atelier 17. During the next decade, this workshop included Louise Bourgeois, Salvador Dalí, Wilfredo Lam, Jacques Lipschitz, Robert Motherwell*, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko*, and Anne Ryan*. Under Hayter's guidance, Ryan, already in her fifties, focused on the woodblock printing style that would first draw attention to her as a visual artist.

* Examples of each of these artists' work are currently on view in the exhibition *Selections from the Permanent Collection*.

HANDMADE PAPER

Anne Ryan's daughter, Elizabeth McFadden, wrote: "It is almost impossible to overestimate the value to her work of Douglass Howell's handmade paper. His white and colored papers became staples of Mother's collages."

Howell was scientific about the production of his paper, taking meticulous notes on his experiments. His work inspires and informs handmade papermaking practice to this day. Howell paper can be identified throughout Ryan's collages by its mottled texture and rich flecks of color.

THE ANDERSEN WINDOW GALLERY

offers alternative views of the permanent collection by focusing on an artist, artwork, theme, or artistic practice. Experimenting with new ways of presentation and interpretation, these installations change quarterly. This unique space was created in collaboration with the Andersen Corporation of Bayport, Minnesota.

Special thanks to Monica McFadden, Mora McFadden, and the McFadden Partnership; Timothy Howell, Elisabeth King, and the Douglass Morse Howell Estate; the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Eugenie Barron; Joe King; Carole Pesner, Kraushaar Galleries, New York; Washburn Gallery, New York.

Furniture courtesy Todd Hegg, Minneapolis.

Additional information is available on the Walker Art Center Web site: www.walkerart.org/Andersen/Ryan/

cover: Anne Ryan, *No. 85*, not dated (between 1948 and 1954), fabric, tin, paper, and paperboard collage, Gift of Elizabeth McFadden, 1979

BIOGRAPHY

- 1889 BORN JULY 20, HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY
- 1903 ATTENDED ACADEMY OF ST. ELIZABETH CONVENT, NEW JERSEY, THROUGH HER JUNIOR YEAR OF COLLEGE
- 1911 MARRIED WILLIAM J. MCFADDEN, A LAWYER, AND LIVED IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY
- 1912 TWIN CHILDREN BORN, WILLIAM J., JR., AND ELIZABETH
- 1919 SECOND SON BORN, THOMAS SORAN MCFADDEN
- 1920 FREQUENTED GREENWICH VILLAGE AND DEVELOPED A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, AMONG WHOM WERE POETS AND ARTISTS
- 1923 LEGAL SEPARATION FROM MCFADDEN
- 1925 VOLUME OF POETRY, *LOST HILLS*, PUBLISHED BY NEW DOOR PRESS, NEW YORK
- 1931 LEFT NEWARK FOR MALLORCA
- 1932 SPENT SUMMER IN PARIS WITH TWINS, SEEING MANY ART EXHIBITIONS, AND LATER RETURNED TO MALLORCA WITH SON WILLIAM
- 1933 MOVED BACK TO THE UNITED STATES
- 1938 BEGAN TO PAINT
- 1941 FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION OF OIL PAINTINGS AT THE ROSE FRIED PINACOTHECA, NEW YORK; MET STANLEY WILLIAM HAYTER AND JOINED ATELIER 17
- 1948 SAW KURT SCHWITTERS EXHIBITION AT THE ROSE FRIED PINACOTHECA AND BEGAN MAKING COLLAGES
- 1949 FIRST MAJOR EXHIBITION OF COLLAGES AND PRINTS AT KHAROUBA GALLERY, PORTLAND, OREGON
- 1950 FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION WITH BETTY PARSONS GALLERY, NEW YORK
- 1951 COLLAGES INCLUDED IN ABSTRACT PAINTING AND SCULPTURE IN AMERICA AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK
- 1954 DIED APRIL 18, MORRISTOWN, NEW JERSEY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED WRITINGS ON ANNE RYAN

- Ashbery, John. "A Place for Everything." *Art News* 69, March 1970, p. 32.
- Burton, Scott. "Reviews and Previews." *Art News* 67, March 1968, p. 24.
- Fitzsimmons, James. "Fifty-Seventh Street in Review." *Art Digest* 25, October 1, 1950, p. 19.
- Gibson, Ann Eden. *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Goodnough, Robert. "Reviews and Previews." *Art News* 50, November 1951, p. 51.
- Guest, Barbara. "Reviews and Previews." *Art News* 52, January 1954, p. 69.
- Kramer, Hilton. "Anne Ryan: Bigness on a Small Scale." *New York Times*, February 3, 1968, p. 25.
- Preston, Stuart. "Artists of Personal Vision." *New York Times*, April 10, 1955, Section 2, p. II.
- Sawin, Martica. "Fifty-Seventh Street." *Art Digest* 28, January 15, 1954, p. 17.
- Windham, Donald. "A Note on Anne Ryan." *Botteghe Oscure* 22, 1958, pp. 267-271.

PUBLISHED WRITINGS BY ANNE RYAN

- Lost Hills*. New York: The New Door, 1925.
- "Fear." *Botteghe Oscure* 10, 1952.
- "She Was Divorced." *Folder Magazine*, 1954.
- "Ludvica." *Paris Review*, 1954.
- "Darkest Leaf." *Botteghe Oscure* 22, 1958.