

Hugh Breckenridge photograph collection

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Finding Aid updated by Hoang Tran



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF THE FINE ARTS

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Summary Information

Repository	The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives
Creator	Hugh Henry Breckenridge (1870-1937)
Title	Hugh Breckenridge photograph collection
Date [bulk]	
Date [inclusive]	1900-1924
Extent	38 black and white photographs, various sizes; 2 post cards
Language	English
Abstract	Collection of personal photographs of Hugh Breckenridge.

Preferred Citation note

[identification of item], Title of Collection, Collection ID#, The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Archives.

Historical note

Lived: 1870-1937

Worked: Philadelphia, PA

Style: Modernist-leaning Landscape, Portrait, Abstraction

The following biography, submitted to AskArt November 2002, is from Marian Clark of Colorado. She is a great-grand daughter of the artist.

Hugh Henry Breckenridge was long associated with Philadelphia as a modernist painter and teacher. From 1887 to 1892, he was a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where he then taught for more than forty years.

In 1892 he was awarded a scholarship enabling him to study in Paris at the Academie Julian with William Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905) and to travel through Europe, going with the Pennsylvania impressionist Walter E. Schofield (1869-1944).

His subsequent landscapes, portraits, and figure paintings reveal the influence of impressionism and an overwhelming fascination with color. His first solo exhibition in 1904 included both paintings and pastels. Breckenridge also produced many commissioned portraits, which provided him with a source of income; these exhibit the dazzling brushwork typical of society portraiture of the period.

A second trip to Europe with Elmer Schofield in 1909 made Breckenridge aware of more avant-garde trends. During the 1910s, he worked alternately in a vigorous neo-impressionist technique, which he referred to as "tapestry painting," and in a somewhat academic style enriched by an expressionist palette. These paintings gained for him national recognition as a foremost modernist whose art was easily accessible to the public.

In 1922, Breckenridge began exhibiting abstract paintings, some of which recall the Improvisations of Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). These abstractions of irregularly shaped, colored planes most commonly suggest the nature or the velocity of modern life. Above all they demonstrate his fascination with the theoretical basis of color.

Breckenridge began teaching at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1894. During the summer of 1900 he and Thomas Anshutz (1851-1912) established the Darby School of Painting in Darby, Pennsylvania; Breckenridge later established his own school in East Gloucester, Massachusetts. In 1919 he became director of fine arts at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore. In his last years Breckenridge sometimes returned to impressionism, painting landscapes of Gloucester and still life paintings.

Marian Clark also provides this personal history:

Hugh Henry was married to Roxanna Grace Holme, and together they had two children, one of which died very young of dysentery, and the other and second born who was Margaret Holme Breckenridge, aka Peggy, my grandmother. Peggy was also an artist and posed often in the classes her father taught.

When Roxanna died, Hugh married one of his students, Dorothy Dozier, who then became Dorothy Dozier Breckenridge. His estate went mostly to Dorothy, who sold most of his work to the Valley House Gallery in Texas, but his daughter from his first marriage had her own collection as well. Donald Vogel and his wife, Margaret, added a room onto their home to store the paintings until they could be restretched and framed. Donald was also an artist and very much admired the work of Breckenridge.

Donald commissioned John Carr to do a story in the "American Art Review" of my grandfather (1967). The Vogels held an exhibit, entitled "Hugh Breckenridge," of his work and published a small book with illustrations.

Dorothy and Donald were good friends for years; however, Dorothy suddenly ceased contact with Donald (probably because of health issues). I spoke with Donald Vogel in 1998 (in his 80s). His son and daughter-in-law now operate the gallery. It is not known where the rest of Dorothy's estate of paintings went after she died (she only kept about six of them (in 1981) nor the medals she possessed reflecting those awards. Dorothy never remarried apparently and has no heirs.

ASSOCIATIONS

Associate, National Academy of Design, New York City, 1913
New York Watercolor Club
Philadelphia Watercolor Club
Connecticut Academy of Fine Art
Society of Washington Artists
Southern States Art League
North Shore Artists Association, Gloucester, Mass.
American Federation of Arts

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Los Angeles County Museum
San Francisco Museum of Art
Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

AWARDS

Atlanta Expo, 1895 (medal)
Paris Expo, 1900 (prize)
Pan American Expo, Buffalo, 1901 (medal)
Society of Washington Etchers, 1903 (prize)
Philadelphia Art Club, 1907 (Medal)
Washington Watercolor Club, 1908 (prize)

Buenos Aires Expo, 1910 (medal)
Pan Pacific Expo, San Francisco, 1915 (gold)

Scope and Contents note

Arrangement note

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access note

Collection is open for research.

The archives reserves the right to restrict access to materials of sensitive nature. Please contact the department for further information.

Conditions Governing Use note

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Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Marian Clark, great granddaughter of Hugh H. Breckenridge.

Provenance note

Donated by Marian Clark, great granddaughter of Hugh H. Breckenridge, April 20, 2015.
Accession 2015.02.

Processing Information note

Processed by Hoang Tran.

Controlled Access Headings

Person(s)

Corporate Name(s)

Genre(s)

Geographic Name(s)

Subject(s)

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

Collection Inventory

Folder Title	Box #	Folder #
Black and white photographs		
postcards		