



PATRICK MCARDLE

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINEART

PATRICK MCARDLE

FIGURES & FORMS

SEPTEMBER 10–OCTOBER 12, 2015



Bouys, 1979, oil on panel, 16 x 20 inches

COVER *Fire Island Heat Wave*, 1969, oil on panel, 18 x 24 inches

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINEART

court street ellsworth, maine 04605 courthousegallery.com 207 667 6611



Speedos, ca 1980, oil on panel, 16 x 20 inches



Long Island Sound, 1979, oil on panel, 18 x 24 inches

PATRICK MCARDLE

FIGURES & FORMS



Patrick McArdle in the studio of French cubist painter Amédée Ozenfant in New York City, ca 1950.

My first encounter with the work of the Irish-American painter Patrick McArdle was neither in a gallery nor from a book. In fact, it was unpremeditated—a moment of artistic pleasure with no heraldry from publicity or personal recommendation of any kind. A pianist colleague and friend had brought me along to an informal supper at the seaside home of a local physician, Arthur, and his wife Deirdre. Upon entering the dining room I was captivated immediately by a canvas above the sideboard that didn't in any way seem ordinary. It was a beach scene so delightful and satisfying that I asked Deirdre who had painted it. The answer was as modest as my introduction to the painting; “My father was an oil painter.” Now six years later I am quite familiar with this unusual master.

McArdle had all the credentials we expect of a fine painter and enough good critical response to engender some important shows. He would have been one-hundred years old this past July. Perhaps not old enough yet to be “discovered” or to finally escape the doubters and the vagaries of the art world. But something makes me go back, and back



Asharoken, 1970, oil on panel, 16 x 20 inches



Beach Umbrellas, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches

again to the canvases, to see what McArdle “saw” and has left to us—a remembrance of fleeting pleasures; *the light and fantastic* of bathers, boaters, ball-frolicking children, skaters, and still life paintings which hardly remain still. Obviously influenced by Henri Matisse and Milton Avery, much like his generational colleague Stephen Pace, McArdle however went forth with something very much his own.

The uninitiated might misunderstand “indefiniteness” on the canvas: McArdle was a pioneer in leaving some of the background unpainted, but purposely, adding to the spontaneity of his approach. Much like a great actor or musician, he was confident expressing uncertainty or chance—certain of an uncertain canvas. This is an important part of the vocabulary of expressive devices, giving life and defying calculation or rigidity.

And there is more that constitutes Patrick McArdle’s style, freshness and originality. Every artist is only as important as he is relevant to his time. Some prefer to express the chaos and tragedies of the last century and some react by turning their back on this, celebrating that what pleases, or even the ridiculous. There is never any darkness in a

McArdle painting. We must acknowledge that lightness and joy is as profound as that which makes us weep.

McArdle lived through the effects of the Great Depression and two World Wars. Let us not underestimate what it takes to smile and laugh. Certainly we have some great examples of that amongst what we think of as profound. Add to that this artist emerged during the greatest development of photographic art and the silent movie. Has McArdle not combined both? He captures a moment but it is never static—there is always motion. For me this is unusual mastery. I hope people will increasingly realize that Patrick McArdle is to be treasured and given a firm place in our hearts and in our history.

— Edmund Battersby
Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
August 2015



Our Boat, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches



Beach Scene, 1978, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Mildred's Purple Suit, 1979, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Northport Harbor in Summer, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



South Harpswell, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Beach Scene with Sailboats, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Working Harbor, 1984, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Pebble Beach, 1979, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches



Grey Bathers, 1968, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches



Scudder, 1969, oil on canvas, 18 x 22 inches



Basin Point, South Harpswell, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Fog on Basin Point, oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



Patrick McArdle at the easel in his studio in Port Jefferson, New York, 1969.

PATRICK MCARDLE

Patrick James McArdle (1915–1997) was born in Nottingham, England, and raised in the hamlet of Crossmaglen, in County Armagh, Ireland. He spent his formative years as an artist studying with the renowned French painter Amédée Ozenfant. At his first exhibition, McArdle’s work was considered “...tres originale et remarquablement fraiche de couleur,” by *France Amerique*.

Upon emigrating from Ireland to the United States, McArdle received his formal education at the Art Student’s League in New York City where he was a pupil of Hans Hoffmann. He spent summers in Maine, studying with marine painter Jay Hall Connaway. Often compared to Henri Matisse, McArdle’s figures exhibit a similar feeling of movement and presence, or as one critic for *Art News* put it, they are ...“whimsical comments on equilibrium...and human manners.”

McArdle showed exclusively in New York City from the 1950s through the 1980s, where Blondelle Gallery, Burr Gallery, Collector’s Gallery, and Greer Gallery mounted exhibitions of his oils and assemblages. McArdle’s work was selected for *Trends in American Art*, an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1955, and *The Betty Chamberlain Review of American Artists*, an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1967. His paintings are represented in the private collections of eminent collectors from the mid-twentieth century such as Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Max Liebling, M. Joel Friedman, and Brahm Miranda, his agent.

In his later years, McArdle lived in Harpswell, Maine, and he used the scenes around him as his subject. His paintings are included in the permanent collections at the Farnsworth Museum, Rockland, Maine, and the Art Museum at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.



Skaters, oil on panel, 5 x 7 inches

COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINEART

court street ellsworth, maine 04605 courthousegallery.com 207 667 6611