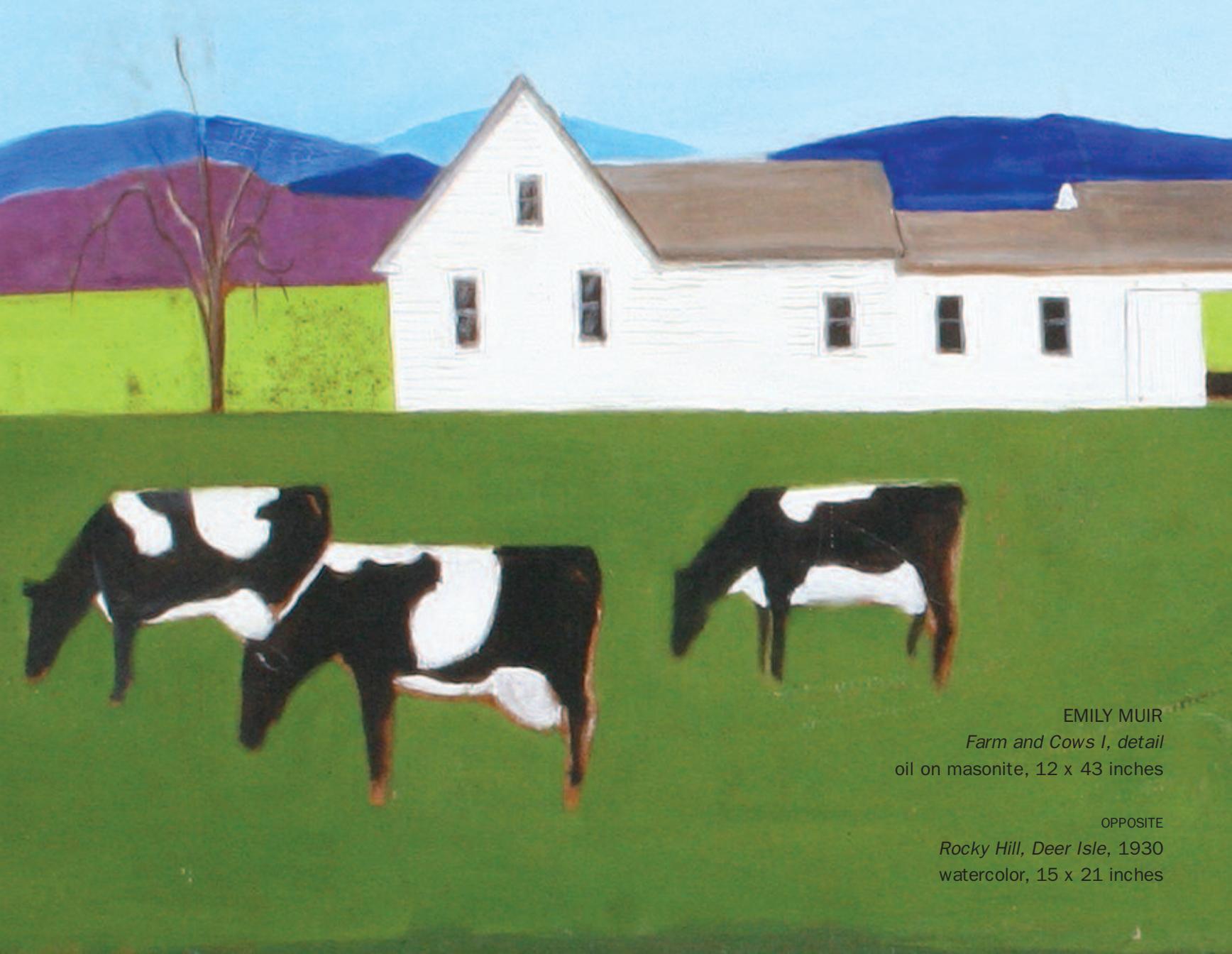


Emily & Bill



THE MUIR ESTATE
COURTHOUSE GALLERY FINE ART



EMILY MUIR

Farm and Cows I, detail

oil on masonite, 12 x 43 inches

OPPOSITE

Rocky Hill, Deer Isle, 1930

watercolor, 15 x 21 inches

THE MUIR ESTATE

AUGUST 16 - SEPTEMBER 14, 2009



COURTHOUSE GALLERY
FINEART

THE MUIR ESTATE

This past winter Carl Little from the Maine Community Foundation called to see if I would be interested in representing the Emily and William Muir Estate. My husband, Michael, and I have long admired their work, so yes, we were interested, and serendipitously—I had just received Emily's autobiography for Christmas.

As we sorted through the remaining artworks in the estate—stacks of paintings, watercolors, drawings, boxes, and mementos—we discovered many treasures remained. Our first exhibit brings together a sampling of these artworks, including sculptures, oil paintings, ceramics, watercolors, drawings, and sketchbooks. Although Bill's sculptures are slated for various museum collections, we are pleased to reacquaint the public with his work by showcasing some of his sculpture in the exhibit.

Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Emily, working with the estate has given me an intimate snapshot into her life and left me with a greater appreciation for her artwork and legacy. I would like to thank Carl and the Foundation for this opportunity and for their confidence in us to represent the Emily and William Muir Estate.

Karin Wilkes
Gallery Director

A LEGACY OF ART AND ACTION

Emily and William Muir settled in Stonington in 1939. Over the next half century-plus they made art, designed houses and helped Haystack find a new home, among other activities. They also developed a nurturing passion for the region, which is carried forth in many ways, including the Emily and William Muir Community Fund at the Maine Community Foundation.

As part of Emily's estate, the foundation received a significant group of paintings, drawings and sculpture by the couple. The sale of this artwork will help to further build the Muirs' legacy of giving to Maine and to the Penobscot Bay region they loved so much.

Carl Little
Maine Community Foundation



Purple Rocks, Modernist
watercolor
15 x 21 inches

OPPOSITE
Small Skunk Cabbage
wood
13 x 8 x 12 inches



WILLIAM MUIR



William Muir (1902-1964) was a Modernist landscape watercolor painter and a noted sculptor. Bill was born in North Dakota and studied at the Minneapolis School of Art before moving to New York City to accept a fellowship at the Art Students League in the mid-1920s. It was there that he met his future wife, Emily, whom he wed in 1928. The young couple traveled the world as commercial artists before settling in Stonington, Maine. Bill enlisted in the Navy in 1938.

His career as a sculptor took off after the war and from 1951 until his death in 1964 he exhibited regularly at the Sculpture Center in New York. In one year alone (1953), his sculptures were included in nine exhibits, which included the Metropolitan, the Pennsylvania Academy, the Detroit Institute, and the Whitney, as well as Bowdoin, Colby and Dartmouth. Bill's sculpture is also included in the book *Maine and Its Role in American Art* (Colby College, 1963).

Bill based his organic wood sculptures on biological and botanical forms. He carved in a variety of woods, including oak, mahogany, African blackwood, Brazilian rosewood, black walnut, maple burls, and domestic applewoods. Bill was so in tune with the nature, his organic forms seem to emerge from the wood. He was able to bring his abstract wood sculpture to life by using motion and the space around the sculpture.

Art historian Carole Calo, who has a special interest in post World War II sculptors said "Certain sculptures inspired by tree braces from which they are crafted defy gravity, emulating the openness and expressionism of welded metal 'drawings in space' of David Smith."

A 1964 article in Time Magazine stated, "nature, with all her wisdom, cannot seem to match by accident what Muir shapes by design...Muir's subtly swiveling works exchange contours with the space that surrounds them, earning comparisons with the smooth biomorphic bulges that mark the sculpture of Arp, Moore, and Brancusi." (*Time*, March 13, 1964)

Emily credits Bill as her life-long inspiration. She said it all came naturally to him: "With him it is no theory, it is a response to life."

Sculptures and paintings on pages 4-9 by William Muir



Balance, african mahogany, 51 inches tall



Old Faithful
watercolor
15 x 21 inches

OPPOSITE
Wintry Coast
watercolor
15 x 21 inches



EMILY MUIR



Emily Muir (1904-2003) was born in Chicago and moved to Brooklyn as a child. In the late 1920s, she took classes at the Art Students League in New York City. Here she met her future husband, Bill, who was working at the League as a sculpture class monitor. Richard Lahey, whom she studied under at the League, was a major influence. He was influential, she noted, “because he pushed me to paint with feeling—to paint what I felt, not so much what I saw.”

She married Bill in 1928. They traveled the world as successful commercial artists during the Depression before settling in Stonington, Maine, where they dedicated the rest of their lives to creating art. Their life-long loving relationship fueled their passion for art and each other.

Emily explored many materials and artistic styles over her long life. She had her own take on cubism, for instance, where space and light create faceted scenes of lobstermen and their boats. Emily painted in oils, and both Emily and Bill drew extensively and painted in watercolors. Emily also worked with ceramics and mosaics. Her mosaic of lobster fishermen graces the lobby of the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland, Maine.

The couples various trips to different parts of the world are well represented in Emily’s body of work. Villagers from the West Indies, such as Trinidad, and parts of South America, were frequent subjects.

A self-taught architect, Emily designed her mother’s family home, Mainstay, which eventually led to a second career as a house designer. When designing houses, Emily said she tried “to suit the site” getting the natural feel for the terrain and how it will be used. She shared her architectural vision with her longtime friend and head carpenter on her designs, Basil Bray. Together the two built 10 houses on property in Crockett Cove on Deer Isle. Muir built more than 40 houses in all, garnering rave reviews from critics, environmentalists and in architectural journals.

Emily’s legacy, however, is her painting. Her work is included in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum of Fine Art, the Farnsworth Museum, the University of Maine, the Portland Museum of Art, and in numerous private collections.

Paintings on the following pages by Emily Muir



Lighthouse Gulls, oil on canvas, 21 x 28 inches



Fleet Is In, Big Storm
oil on canvas
19 x 26 inches

OPPOSITE

Getting Bait Aboard
oil on canvas
24 x 32 inches





Dairy Cows
oil on canvas
16 x 22 inches

OPPOSITE
Farmhouse with Orange Fields
oil on masonite
24 x 36 inches





Three-Masted Schooner

oil on canvas

19 x 26 inches

Island off Stonington

oil on canvas

20 x 30 inches





Snowy Landscape with Orange
oil on canvas
20 x 26 inches

OPPOSITE
Mountain River
oil on canvas
25 x 38 inches





Stonington Christmas Parade
oil on canvas
22 x 33 inches

OPPOSITE
Dancing the Night Away
oil on canvas
22 x 34 inches





Farm with White Tree
oil on canvas
20 x 28 inches

OPPOSITE
Farm and Cows I, detail
oil on masonite
12 x 43 inches





Emily Muir, *Amaryllis*, oil, 24 x 18 inches

“Emily Muir goes her quiet way creating art that will survive for generations. What she is preserving is a priceless heritage. ‘After all,’ she says, ‘art at first was limited to the church, then the wealthy, and then it became pictures on a wall. Today it shows signs of becoming what it should be—a part of everything around us, our clothing, our homes, our cities, our very lives. Art should reflect the best of all these.’”

—Martin Dibner, *Seacoast Maine* (1973)

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6 Court Street Ellsworth, Maine 04605 courthousegallery.com 207 667 6611