



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

MINERVA JOSEPHINE CHAPMAN (1858-1947)

Lilacs

Oil on canvas

16 x 12 ½ inches

Signed lower right

Inscribed “Étude Fleurs”

Minerva Chapman was born to a wealthy family in Altmar, New York in 1858. Her father was a successful banker and tannery owner. She attended the University of Chicago and Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and received her artistic training at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she studied under Annie Shaw and John H. Vanderpoel. Chapman then traveled to Europe where she studied in Munich with Georg Jacobedis before continuing her training at the Académie Julian in Paris under Tony Robert-Fleury, William-Adolphe Bouguereau, Gustave-Claude-Étienne Courtois and Charles Lasar. Her studies with Lasar had the most impact, as he encouraged her painting of still lifes and *plein air* landscapes in a bold Impressionist style. In 1897, Chapman exhibited two still life paintings at the Paris Salon. Though she would spend most of her professional life in Paris, Chapman intermittently returned to the United States.

In 1897, Chapman opened a studio in Chicago and visited the summer art colonies in Wisconsin and Michigan. She also began exhibiting her still lifes at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Society of Western Artists. In 1900, she began painting watercolor miniatures on ivory, for which she would become best known, completing 181 throughout her career. Returning to Paris in 1903, Chapman befriended Emile Rene Menard, who influenced her production of small oil sketches. In 1905, she became one of the first American women to be elected to the prestigious Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.

The advent of World War I prompted Chapman's return to the United States, where she lived in San Diego, California until 1917 before returning to Paris the following year. In 1925, Chapman



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permanently returned to the United States, settling in Palo Alto, California, where she remained until her death. Suffering from failing eyesight, Chapman completed her last painting in 1932.¹

Best known for her role in the revival movement for miniature watercolor paintings on ivory, Chapman also produced a large body of work in oil, painting miniatures, full-size landscapes, still lifes, portraits and interiors in an Impressionist style. This still life depicts lilacs in a blue vessel against a dark background. Where Chapman's early palette included bright greens and blues, this painting reflects the more subdued tones of purple, gray and russet, which she adopted after 1895.

Chapman exhibited widely throughout her lifetime. Her paintings were exhibited at the World's Columbian Expo (Chicago), 1893; Paris Salon, 1899-1926; Société Nationale des Beaux Arts (Paris), 1897, 1905, 1909; Pan-American Expo (Buffalo), 1901; Panama-California Expo (San Diego), 1915 (two gold medals); Palo Alto Art Club, 1929 (solo); California Society of Miniature Painters, 1929 (gold medal), 1931 (1st prize), 1936; Century of Progress Expo (Chicago), 1933; County Fair (LA), 1935; Mount Holyoke College, 1986 (solo).²

¹ "Minerva Chapman," *askART*, accessed Sep. 15, 2017, http://www.askart.com/artist_bio/Minerva_Josephine_Chapman/8048/Minerva_Josephine_Chapman.aspx.
² *Ibid.*