



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

GRACE COCHRANE SANGER (1885-1966)

Grace Cochrane Sanger was born in Newark, New Jersey to Charlotte DeWolf Hague and William R. Cochran, who worked as an editor.¹ She had one older sister, Arline. In August of 1905, she married Dr. Frank Dyer Sanger, a general practitioner who had graduated from Johns Hopkins University. The couple had four sons – Frank Dyer, Jr. (1907-1911), Hamilton Hague Sanger (1909-1995), Frank DeWolfe Sanger (1913-1997), and Edward Johnson Sanger (1917-2000).

Though largely forgotten today, Sanger was recognized in her time as a skilled portrait painter. In addition to painting, she also worked as a book and magazine illustrator. Sanger received her training under William Merritt Chase (1849-1916), Hugh Breckenridge (1870-1937) and Howard Pyle (1853-1911).² She painted many prominent members of Baltimore society and exhibited her work locally. Sanger's exhibition record seems to be limited to the early 1930s. In 1930, she submitted a portrait of a young boy to the Baltimore Friends of Art exhibition. One critic described the schoolboy as having a "shining morning face [that] seems tediously and painfully executed; nevertheless, it does capture a mood of expectancy and quickness."³ This sentiment could also apply to Sanger's 1911 portrait of her son Frank Dyer, Jr., who tragically died that same year at the age of four. Indeed, Sanger seemed to have a particular proclivity and skill for rendering children, which is evidenced through her illustrations of young girls donning hats for a spread in *The Ladies' Home Journal*. Here, their youthful vibrancy is captured in their plump rosy cheeks and round faces.

¹ Occupation listed on the 1880 United States Federal Census.

² "Second Exhibition for Junior League: One-Man Show by Grace Cochrane Sanger to Open." *The Baltimore Sun* (Baltimore, MD), Dec. 11, 1932, p. 60.

³ *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore, MD) Feb. 14, 1930, p. 27.



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Portrait of Frank Dyer Sanger, Jr., 1911 as reproduced in *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore, MD), May 18, 1911.



“My Best Hat” drawings by Grace Cochrane Sanger published in *The Ladies' Home Journal* c. 1910.

In 1932, she held a solo exhibition at the Junior League Art Gallery, which was arranged by Mrs. Robert O. Bonnell and Mrs. Virgil Hillyer, with the cooperation of the Baltimore Museum of Art.⁴ Among the oil and pastel portraits shown were members of local Baltimore society, including those of Redmond C. Stewart, MacDuff Symington (son of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Symington), Dr. J. M. T. Finney, Major Louis E. Lamborn (headmaster of McDonogh School), Mrs. Hiram Woods, Mrs. Arthur Machen, Mrs. John A. Tompkins, Decie Finney (son of Mr. Eben Finney). Also included were portraits of Bobby Cassatt (son of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Cassatt of Philadelphia), and Caroline J. George, and the Countess de Janze, of Paris.⁵

While Sanger’s illustrations and commissioned portraits may appear a bit conservative in both style and subject, works such as *Woman with Red Parasol* and *Woman in an Interior*, show her enthusiasm

⁴ *The Evening Sun* (Baltimore, MD), Dec. 13, 1932, p. 24.

⁵ “Second Exhibition for Junior League: One-Man Show by Grace Cochrane Sanger to Open,” *The Baltimore Sun* (Baltimore, MD), Dec. 11, 1932, p. 60.



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for experimentation in palette, composition and technique. Overall, Sanger's works exhibit a freshness and diversity that reflect a lifelong passion for artistic creation and investigation. Sanger died on October 26, 1966 just outside of Baltimore at her home in Ruxton, Maryland.