

AMERICAN
FINE ART
M A G A Z I N E



Electrical in Movement

Hawthorne Fine Art examines 21 women artists active throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries

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Hawthorne Fine Art

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Sarah Cole (1805-1857), *Ancient Column Near Syracuse*, ca. 1848. Oil on canvas, 11⁷/₈ x 11⁷/₈ in.

Clara Perry's landscapes have sold for thousands at auction, including an \$8,500 hammer price at Nadeau's Auction Gallery, Inc., in 2006. Yet she, like many fellow women artists, has been overlooked in the art history realm. When you search for her entry in the Benezit Dictionary of Artists, for example, the result is: "See PERRY, Walter Scott"—her husband. Clara Perry's work, along with two dozen pieces by women artists active in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is spotlighted in the new Hawthorne Fine Art *Electrical in Movement: American Women Artists at Work* exhibition in New York City.

"It's not the case we know nothing about Clara or her life—rather, her life and work are almost exclusively

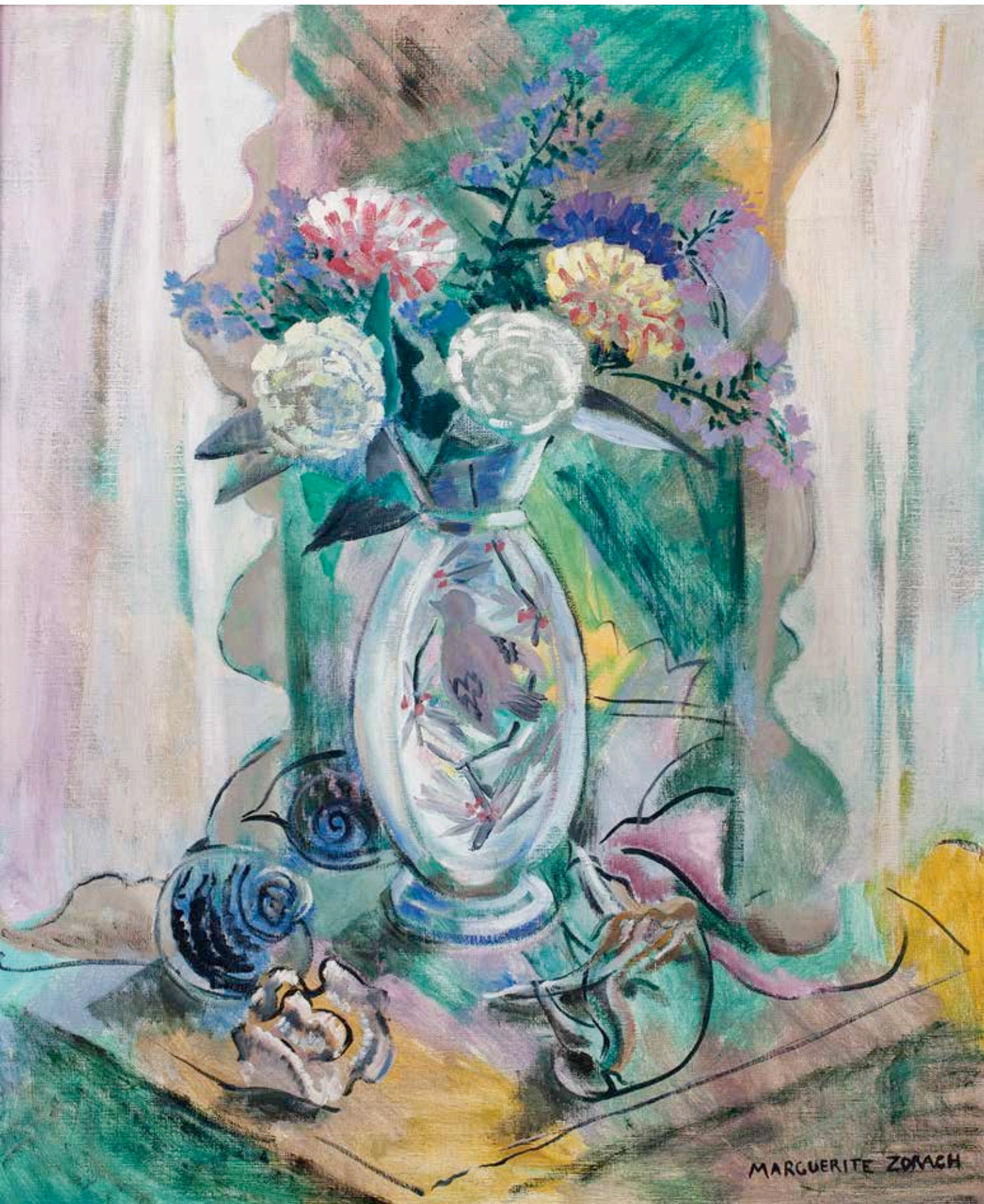


Lilian Westcott Hale (1880-1963), *Portrait of a Lady (The Veil)*. Pencil and charcoal on paper, 9 x 7 in.

considered in the context of her husband's," says Hawthorne Fine Art senior researcher Courtney Anne Lynch. "This is the perfect example for the motivation behind the *Electrical in Movement* exhibition: it aims to bring figures like Clara out of the shadows, to consider them for the independent

women they were, and to shine a light on their singular talents."

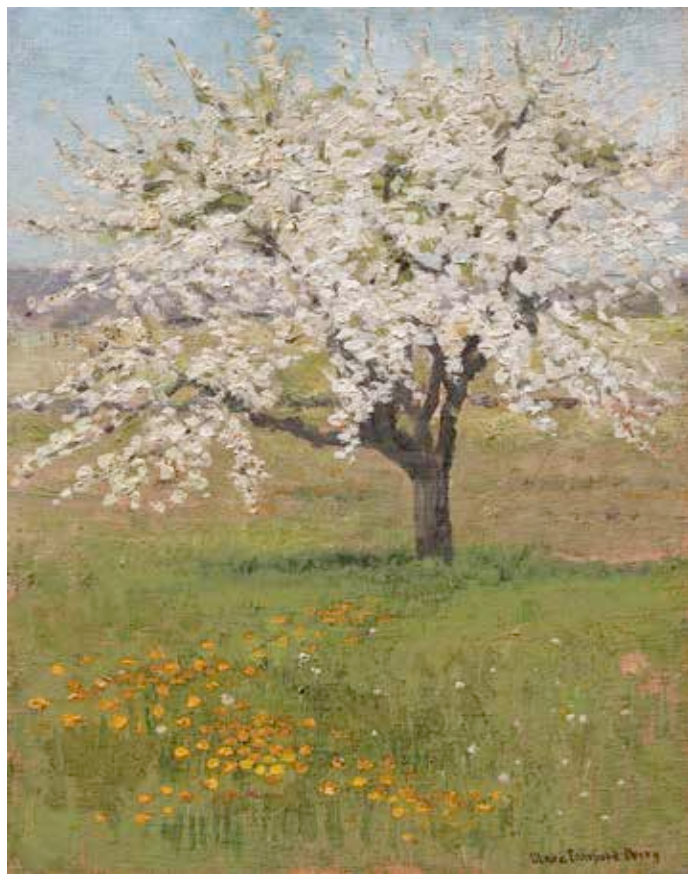
The exhibition title comes from Margaret Fuller's quote, "The especial genius of women I believe to be electrical in movement, intuitive in function, spiritual in tendency," from the 1845 publication *Woman in the Nineteenth*



Marguerite Zorach (1887-1968), *Flowers and Shells*. Oil on canvas, 23½ x 19½ in., signed lower right.



Alice Hirsch (1888-1935), *Chrysler Building*, 1931. Oil on canvas board, 16 x 12 in., signed lower right, titled and dated: '1931'.



Clara Perry (1870-1941), *Tree in Bloom*. Oil on board, 14 x 11 in., signed lower right.

Century. In the essay, Fuller advocated self-reliance among women for achieving equality with their male counterparts, a sentiment evident in the exhibition.

“While researching the exhibition, I came to find these women were almost unanimously strong-minded, strong-willed art critics and outspoken advocates for women in general who, for whatever reason—be it the passage of time, or the societal circumstances under which they were working—have been relegated to the background of the art historical record,” Lynch says.

The exhibition features diverse styles, from sporting works such as Elizabeth Strong’s *In Full Cry*; to pieces showing the influence of impressionism, such as Maud Mary Mason’s oil *View of Gramercy Park [from 36 Gramercy Park East]* and Pauline Palmer’s circa 1920s oil *Girl with Red Parasol*. Mediums such as pencil and charcoal are seen in Lilian Westcott Hale’s *Portrait of a Lady (The Veil)*, while Alice Hirsch’s 1931 oil *Chrysler Building* depicts an iconic New York landmark at night.

Lynch notes the early to mid-19th

century was a complicated time for women artists, who actively pursued training and exhibited their work but were often unable to make art their professions because of societal circumstance and the emphasis of women living in domestic roles. Artists such as these in the exhibition include Sarah Cole and H. Sophie Loury. Cole created breathtaking Hudson River School landscapes, such as her circa 1848 oil *Ancient Column Near Syracuse*, but most are familiar with her brother, Thomas Cole. Many female artists during this time used only initials or their last name when signing works to conceal their gender, such as Loury, who signed works, such as her 1887 *A Bevy of Quail*, H.S. Loury.

Artists in the early 20th century, as well as the three contemporary artists who are also in the exhibition, were more able to become professional artists and be publicly celebrated. One such artist, Marguerite Zorach, is represented in the exhibition with her oil *Flowers and Shells*.

Lynch says during her research, she was constantly impressed with the roles

the exhibition’s artists had as pillars of their artistic communities. Palmer, for example, was the first woman president of the Chicago Society of Artists and was a constant feature in Chicago-area newspapers throughout the 1920s and ’30s, where she was covered as a well-loved teacher, advocate and champion of the arts. Another artist, Harriet R. Lumis, whose oil on canvas *The Pine Forest* is in the exhibition, was founder of the Academic Artists Association, which advocated for realist artists.

Hawthorne Fine Art managing partner Jennifer Krieger says her participation in the 2010 Thomas Cole National Historic site exhibition *Remember the Ladies: Women of the Hudson River School* makes her excited to again curate the art of talented American women artists.

“What I have enjoyed most in composing this show is experiencing the diversity of their aesthetic contributions, over a span of centuries,” says Krieger, “encompassing major movements and a wide range of subject matter, all handled with great success.” ■