



LOUISE ANGELL (1859—1949)

Landscape with Distant Castle

Oil on seashell, 4 x 6 ¼ inches

Signed verso: “Angell”

Louise Angell was a product of the progressive, burgeoning arts scene of Providence, Rhode Island at the end of the nineteenth century. Born in 1859 in the northern part of the city, she was one of the first students enrolled at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), which first opened its doors in 1877. RISD is known for being “founded and nurtured by women”; the art school’s opening was funded by the Rhode Island Women’s Centennial Commission, and actively welcomed women to join its classes. Within RISD’s halls, women found support to pursue their artistic talents and careers—40 years before they were granted the right to vote—and Angell was a part of that important history.

Angell remained in Providence for most her adult life. She lived with her parents, turning a room in the house into her studio. She became a member of the Providence Art Club and the Providence Water Color Club, two of the oldest artists’ clubs in the nation, as well as being notable for including women in their founding memberships. At some point, Angell travelled to Dresden, Germany, where she trained with the acclaimed miniaturist A.L. Eckardt (1845—1906), from whom she most likely learned the skills required to execute this picturesque seascape on a seashell.



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

Painted on the inside of a six-inch shell, Angell captured a remarkable amount of detail in such a small field. One can see the individual branches and leaves of the trees, minute details that must have been created using brushes consisting of only a few hairs. Angell carefully delineated the frosty waters of the ocean from the mountain's cliffs from using differing directionalities of brushstrokes of similar pigments. The artist used the shell's naturally glossy sheen to her advantage; it infuses the sky with warmth from a sun that shines beyond the painting's view, lighting the sailboat idling in the bay below. Angell created a miniature world on the surface of a seashell.

Having never married, Angell eventually moved to Massachusetts around 1915 to live with her brother, presumably after the death of her parents. She continued to paint in her new home, becoming known as an accomplished miniaturist, craftswoman, and teacher. Angell died in 1949 at the age of 90, and was buried in her hometown of Providence.

Selected Bibliography

Petteys, Chris. *Dictionary of Women Artists: An International Dictionary of Women Artists Born Before 1900*. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985.