



# HAWTHORNE

## Fine Art

### May Fairchild (1872-1959)

Mary Elizabeth Bartlett Fairchild was born in Canton, Massachusetts to Kate Mascroft and George F. Bartlett. She attended Westbrook Seminary in Portland, Maine where she received her Laureate of Arts degree in 1899. She was the class salutatorian.<sup>1</sup> She began her artistic training at the Cowles School in Boston before studying at the Art Students League in New York under Kenyon Cox, William Merritt Chase, and Irving Wiles.<sup>2</sup> She also studied in Paris at the Colarossi Academy under Andre L'hoté.<sup>3</sup> Fairchild was widowed by her first husband, Marshall Barrows, with whom she had three children. She later married and had two children with Charles Nelson Fairchild of East Orange, New Jersey. A portrait painter and miniaturist, she was known professionally as May Fairchild.<sup>4</sup>

In 1907, Fairchild exhibited *The Rose* at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Paintings by Prominent Artists at the Poland Springs Art Gallery in South Poland, Maine.<sup>5</sup> The following year she loaned a portrait, owned by her father, to the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Miniatures held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.<sup>6</sup> In 1908 and 1909, she loaned a portrait and a miniature entitled *Lily*, owned by her husband, to the annual miniature exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy.<sup>7</sup>

In 1915, Fairchild contributed two works the Ninetieth Annual Exhibition at the National Academy of Design.<sup>8</sup> In 1916, she contributed a portrait miniature of Whitney Kelsey to the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Miniatures at the Pennsylvania Academy.<sup>9</sup> In 1918, she exhibited *The Rose* at the Catherine Lorillard Wolf Art Club. A critic from *American Art News* said that the miniature on ivory was “pleasing.”<sup>10</sup> Fairchild spent the summer of 1918 in Rhinebeck, New

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<sup>1</sup> “Westbrook Seminary,” *Portland Daily Press* (Portland, Maine) Fri, June 30, 1899, 2.

<sup>2</sup> “Mrs. Fairchild; Noted Artist,” *Poughkeepsie Journal* (Poughkeepsie, New York) Mon, Nov 30, 1959, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Hastings Falk, *Who was Who in American Art 1564-1975* (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1999) 1079.

<sup>4</sup> “Mrs. Mary E.B. Fairchild,” *The Kingston Daily Freeman* (Kingston, New York) · Thu, Dec 3, 1959, 12.

<sup>5</sup> *13<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibit of Paintings by Prominent Artists* (South Poland, ME: Hiram Ricker & Sons, Inc., 1907). 17, 37.

<sup>6</sup> *Catalogue of the Seventh Annual Exhibition of Miniatures* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1908) 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Catalogue of the Eighth Annual Exhibition of Miniatures* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1909) 10.; *Catalogue of the Ninth Annual Exhibition of Miniatures, November 14 to December 11, 1910* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1910) 9.

<sup>8</sup> *National Academy of Design Ninetieth Annual Exhibition* (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1915) 22.

<sup>9</sup> *Catalogue of the Fourteenth Annual Philadelphia Watercolor Exhibition and the Fifteenth Annual Exhibition of Miniatures* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1916), 16.

<sup>10</sup> “Watercolors and Pastels at Wolfe Club,” *American Art News*, Vol. XVI, No. 27 (New York: The American Art News Co.) April 13, 1918, 2.



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York where she had taken a new studio.<sup>11</sup> The following year she was the manager of the Rhinebeck Summer School of Painting at Maple Terrace Farm.<sup>12</sup>

In 1920, Fairchild exhibited two portrait miniatures at 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of Miniatures at the Pennsylvania Academy.<sup>13</sup> In 1921, after completing a portrait of the daughter of a Mrs. Caroline Lane Goodwin of East Orange, NJ, the artist held a reception in her studio in the Sherwood Building on West 57<sup>th</sup> Street. The portrait was well received and led to further commissions.<sup>14</sup> Later that year, Fairchild was among a group of artists including Jane Peterson, C.M. Bell, Sidney, Dickenson, Charles Hafner, and James Weiland who displayed their work at the Sherwood Building in the studio of Alice Judson.<sup>15</sup>

In 1924, Fairchild contributed a profile in miniature entitled *Mrs. G.F.B* to the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition of the Brooklyn Society Miniature Painters. A critic for *The Art News* said that the work, “fulfills the strict exactations of the medium and maintains a life-like quality.”<sup>16</sup> In October of the same year, Fairchild executed a portrait miniature of Master Oliver Kintzing Wallop, who became the Earl of Portsmouth. The miniature was sent to England and hung with the family portraits.<sup>17</sup> In 1925, she was among several prominent artists including Jane Peterson, Theresa Bernstein and Hayley Lever who exhibited at Macy’s. The department store had opened an art department after selling works by contemporary artists for many years.<sup>18</sup>

In 1926, Fairchild moved her studio from the Sherwood building to Carnegie Hall.<sup>19</sup> In 1932, she exhibited at the James Little Gallery in Woodstock, NY.<sup>20</sup> In 1934, she and her daughter

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<sup>11</sup> “With the Artists,” *American Art News*, Vol XVI, No. 18 (New York: The American Art News Co.) February 9, 1918, 11.

<sup>12</sup> *American Art Annual*, Volume XVI, (Washington, D.C.: The American Federation of Arts, 1919) 204.

<sup>13</sup> *Annual Water Color and Miniature Exhibitions Catalogue* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1920) 13, 17.

<sup>14</sup> “Studio Gossip,” *American Art News*, Vol. XIX, No. 33 (New York: Brant Publications, Inc.) *Saturday*, May 28, 1921, 5.

<sup>15</sup> “Studio Gossip,” *The American Art News* (New York: The American Art News, Co.) *Saturday*, December 24, 1921, 7.

<sup>16</sup> “Brooklyn Miniaturists Exhibit,” *The Art News* (New York: The American Art News Co.1924) *Saturday*, March 15, 1924, 8.

<sup>17</sup> “Studio Notes,” *The Art News* Vol. XXIII, No. 3 (New York: The American Art News, Co.) October 25, 1924, 6.

<sup>18</sup> “Works of Prominent Artists Sold in a New Department at Macy’s,” *The Art News*, Vol. XXIII, No. 18 (New York: The American Art News, Co.) *Saturday*, February 7, 1925, 4.

<sup>19</sup> “Studio Notes,” *The American Art News* (New York: The American Art News, Co.) *Saturday*, October 30, 1926, 9.

<sup>20</sup> “Mrs. Fairchild; Noted Artist,” *Poughkeepsie Journal* (Poughkeepsie, New York), Mon, Nov 30, 1959, 18.



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Elizabeth Nelson Fairchild were among the resident artists at Carnegie Hall to exhibit their work in the Carnegie Hall Art Gallery.<sup>21</sup>

During her lifetime, Fairchild was a member of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors, the Art Students League, the Brooklyn Miniature Society, the Wolf Art Club, the Allied Art Association, and the Yonkers Art Association. She exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1916 and with the Society of Independent Artists in 1917.<sup>22</sup>

Mary Elizabeth Bartlett Fairchild died in 1959. She was 90 years old.

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<sup>21</sup> "Carnegie Hall Artists," *The Art Digest*, Volume VIII, No. 11 (New York: Arts Communications Group) March 1, 1934, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Hastings Falk, *Who was Who in American Art 1564-1975* (Madison, CT: Sound View Press, 1999) 1079.