



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art



LOUISE HOWLAND KING COX (1865-1945)

Blue and White, 1904

Oil on canvas

49 1/2 x 33 1/2 inches (sight)

62 1/2 x 46 1/2 inches (framed)

Signed Louise Cox and dated 1904, lower left

“Mrs. Cox makes a specialty of children's portraits, and some of her happiest results have been obtained when her own charming children have acted as the models.”¹

A portrait and decorative artist, Louise Cox was born in San Francisco in 1865 to Anna T. (Stott) and James C. King, a lawyer.

Her mother, a native New Englander, resided in Honolulu for two years as a young girl. She returned at the age of twenty-three and remained in Hawaii for eight years. A journalist, Anna T. King was for many years an editor for the *Musical Courier*. She was the paper's London representative from 1905 to 1914.

At the age of five, Cox moved with her parents and siblings to New York City. When she was seven, her mother filed for divorce from Cox's father. During the divorce proceedings, her father fatally shot the man he believed to be having an affair with his wife. Sentenced to life in prison, James C. King was pardoned in 1895, after spending fifteen years in the New York State penitentiary.²

In 1881 at the age of 16, Cox began her formal artistic training at the National Academy of Design. After two years of study, she enrolled at the Art Students' League where her instructors included Charles Y. Turner and Kenyon Cox.³ She also studied in Europe where she visited the galleries of Berlin and London.⁴

In 1887, she exhibited *The Lotus Eaters* at the National Academy and later at the Paris Exposition. Her figurative work was lauded by artists at the Art Students' League including Benjamin Constant who found the work far more advanced than that of a young girl.⁵ By the time she was 24, Cox was earning an income from the sale of her studies and for her decorative murals executed in the homes of wealthy patrons. While known for her portraits and figurative

¹ Helen L. Earle, *Biographical Sketches of American Artists* (Lansing: Michigan State Library, 1915) 65.

² “After Fifteen Years,” *Boston Evening Transcript* (Boston, Massachusetts) Sat, May 4, 1895, 10.

³ “Women Who Win Their Way,” *The Illustrated American*, Vol. III, No. 26 August 16, 1890, (New York: Illustrated American Publishing Co., 1890) 249.

⁴ “Clever Women Artists,” *The Leavenworth Standard* (Leavenworth, Kansas), Mon, Jan 12, 1891, 2.

⁵ *Ibid*



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LOUISE COX
No. 76—Blue and White

Catalogue of the Ninth Annual Exhibition at the Carnegie Institute, Nov 3, 1904 – Jan 1, 1905: Illustration 76.

Her daughter Caroline, born in 1898, can be seen in Cox's portrait entitled *Blue and White*, 1904. Depicted in a white dress with a lace collar, Caroline sits to the side of a blue chair accented with gold. She is positioned on the chair as if to share the seat with another child. A formal portrait photograph of the Cox children taken around the same time captures Caroline in the same white dress. Just as in the painting, she is positioned to accommodate another child. In this case, her elder brother who is seated beside her.

Cox's *Blue and White* was exhibited in 1904 in Pittsburgh at the Ninth Annual Exhibition of the Carnegie Institute.¹⁰ The work which was illustrated in the exhibition catalogue was also reproduced in *The Pittsburgh Gazette* on Dec 1, 1904.

During her lifetime, Cox exhibited widely and was awarded with numerous awards including the 3rd Hallgarten prize at the National Academy of Design (1896); a bronze medal at the Paris

work, Cox also excelled in the decorative arts. She designed two stained glass windows for Louis Comfort Tiffany.⁶ In 1890, Her painting *Orpheus and Eurydice* was displayed at a reception for artist Edwin Austin Abbey given by the Art Students' League.⁷

In 1892, the artist married her former instructor and notable American artist Kenyon Cox.⁸ In 1896, the couple settled in Cornish, New Hampshire. They had three children together. When not working on portrait commissions, Cox often had the local children of Cornish sit for her. Her children were also frequent models.⁹



Davis Sanford. Formal portrait of the Cox children, ca. 1904. Allyn Cox papers, 1856-1982. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁶ "Clever Women Artists," *The Leavenworth Standard* (Leavenworth, Kansas), Mon, Jan 12, 1891, 2.

⁷ "Two Young American Artists," *The Morning Journal-Courier* (New Haven, Connecticut), Sat, Aug 30, 1890, 1.

⁸ "Latest Gleanings," *Boston Evening Transcript* (Boston, Massachusetts), Fri, Jul 1, 1892, 10.

⁹ Steve Shipp, *American Art Colonies 1850-1930* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996) 13.

¹⁰ *Catalogue of the Ninth Annual Exhibition at the Carnegie Institute* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Institute, 1904) 176.



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Universal Exposition (1900); silver medal at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo (1902); Julia Shaw Memorial Prize at the Society of American Artists (1903); silver medal at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904). She was an associate member of the National Academy of Design.

Today, her work can be found in major collections including the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, D.C.

Louise Howland King Cox died in 1945.