



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Lydia Eastwick Longacre (1870-1951)

Lydia E. Longacre was born in New York City in 1870 to Lydia Anne Longacre and Andrew Longacre, a clergyman. Her parents came from prominent Philadelphia families. Her paternal grandfather, James Barton Longacre, was a respected portrait painter and engraver. He worked as the chief engraver at the United States Mint in Philadelphia for over a decade. Her father was also a skilled engraver and watercolorist.¹ Rev. Longacre served in a number of churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland and New York before attending the pastorate at the Madison Avenue Methodist Church in New York City. After he retired from the clergy he spent his free time painting miniatures.²

By 1896, Longacre was one of a number of “Promising ‘girl artists,’ ” studying at New York City’s Art Students League.³ Her teachers at the League included William Merrit Chase (1849-1916) and H. Siddons Mowbray (1858-1928). She further studied in Paris at the Academie Colarossi under James McNeil Whistler and later Robert Henri.⁴ Longacre was fond of Whistler and considered him a friend.⁵

In 1909, Longacre participated in the 18th Annual Exhibition of the Woman’s Art Club of New York held at Knoedler Gallery.⁶ When she exhibited with the Woman’s Club at the MacBeth Galleries the following year the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* described her painting entitled *The Back Bone of the Hills* as, “a beautifully homely sweep of country.”

In 1911, Longacre exhibited with the Lyme Art Association in Old Lyme, Connecticut. In 1913, her work was included with artists such as Childe Hassam, Frank Bicknell, and Clark G. Voorhees at the Twelfth Annual Exhibition of the Lyme Art Association.⁷ Longacre’s younger sister Breta Longacre (1887-1923) was also a painter of note. Inspired by her sister, Breta became a member of the Lyme Art Colony and exhibited with the group in 1914 and 1915.⁸

¹ “Longacre family papers, [ca. 1810]-1952: Biographical/Historical Note” Archives of American Art, accessed March 31, 2021, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/longacre-family-papers-9192>.

² “A Loss to Methodism,” *Statesman Journal* (Salem, Oregon), Thu, Mar 15, 1906, 8.

³ “Girls’ Latin Quarter,” *Boston Post* (Boston, Massachusetts) · Sun, Sep 6, 1896 · Page 13

⁴ Carrie Reborra Barratt, Lori Zabar, “Lydia E. Longacre,” *American Portrait Miniatures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, (The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2010) p. 250

⁵ “Gives Interesting Side Lights on Whistler...,” *Quad-City Times* (Davenport, Iowa) · Mon, Jan 22, 1923 10.

⁶ “Woman’s Art Club,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), Sat, May 1, 1909, 8.

⁷ “Old Lyme Artists Exhibit,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), Thu, Aug 21, 1913, 10.

⁸ “Breta Longacre (1887-1923),” Florence Griswold Museum, accessed March 31, 2021, <http://collections.flogris.org/Art58?sid=23&x=1471892>.



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Longacre earned a reputation for her miniatures which critics often referred to as “exquisite.” In 1914, the *Norwich Bulletin* called the artist, “The famous miniature painter, Miss Lydia Longacre of New York...”⁹ In 1916, the Society of American Miniature Painters and the New York Society of Etchers held a joint exhibition at Montross Galleries in New York City. Longacre’s work was comprised of numerous loans from patrons including Florence Griswold further revealing her popularity as an artist.¹⁰

In 1924, the Lyme Art Association held its Twenty-Third Annual exhibition. Longacre’s miniatures according to the *Hartford Courant*, “...seem to approach perfection.”¹¹ In 1937, Longacre exhibited a portrait of fellow artist Rosina Cox Boardman (1878-1970) at the Thirty-Sixth Annual Exhibition of the Lyme Art Association. The critic for the *Meriden Record* described the portrait as “engaging.”¹² A portrait of Longacre painted by Boardman in 1929 can be found in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

In 1939, Longacre received the bronze Medal of Honor from the Pennsylvania Society of Miniature Painters for her painting entitled *My Father* at the Thirty-Eighth Annual Exhibition of Miniatures at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.¹³ In 1949, she received the Levantia White Boardman Memorial medal of the American Society of Miniature Painters.¹⁴

During her lifetime, Longacre was a member of the American Society of Miniature Painters, the Pennsylvania Society of Miniature Painters, and the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors Longacre. A member of the Lyme Art Colony, she exhibited with the Lyme Art Association 25 times over a period of 40 years.

Today, the artist’s work can be found in the collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Florence Griswold Museum.

Lydia Eastwick Longacre died in 1951.

⁹ “The Bulletin,” *Norwich Bulletin* (Norwich, Connecticut), Wed, Oct 21, 1914, 5.

¹⁰ “Miniature Paintings and Etchings at the Montross Galleries,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York), Sun, Nov 5, 1916, 28.

¹¹ “Pleasing Pictures at Lyme Exhibit,” *Hartford Courant* (Hartford, Connecticut), Fri, Aug 8, 1924, 5.

¹² “Lyme Holds Second Exhibit,” *Meriden Record* (Meriden, Connecticut), Mon, Jul 12, 1937, 3.

¹³ “Art News,” *Miami News* (Miami, Florida), Sun, Oct 22, 1939, 27.

¹⁴ Carrie Rebora Barratt, Lori Zabar, “Lydia E. Longacre,” *American Portrait Miniatures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, (The Metropolitan Museum of Art: New York, 2010) 250.