

HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

FELICIE WALDO HOWELL (1897-1968)

Felice Waldo Howell was born in Honolulu, Hawaii to Harriet B. (Kinner) and Warren Eugene Howell. Her father was a teacher in the Seventh-day Adventist educational program and did missionary work in Hawaii and Greece. He later served as president of Healdsburg College in California and as a private secretary for the president of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Maryland.¹

By 1910, the Howell family was residing in Washington, D.C. Howell studied at the Corcoran School of Art where she received awards and honors including a gold medal in the life and antiques class (1912), an Honorable Mention in the still life class (1913), silver medals in the still life class and in the draped life class (1914), and a silver medal in the portrait class (1915).

Howell began exhibiting her work while still a student and by 1916 was exhibiting in leading exhibitions in New York, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C. In 1914, she contributed six paintings to the annual exhibition of the New York Watercolor Club.² In 1915, when she sent *The Pier* to the annual exhibition of the Philadelphia Watercolor Club the *Evening Star* wrote:

*“In a very few strokes she gives the character of the place, picturing the life of the street, the aspect of the moment, with truth and vividness. Hers is, indeed, the art of elimination, the art of saying just enough and not too much. And the best of it is that she is almost at the beginning of the road and not getting toward the end.”*³

Howell traveled to Europe to study but returned home during World War I. She continued her studies under Henry B. Snell at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women, known today as Moore College of Art and Design.⁴ By 1917, Howell had moved to New York City and established a studio.⁵

¹ “Prof. W.E. Howell Dies in Takoma Park,” *Evening star* (Washington, District of Columbia) · Tue, Jul 6, 1943, 12.

² “News and Notes of Art and Artists,” *Evening Star* (Washington, District of Columbia) Sat, Nov 21, 1914, 21.

³ “News and Notes of Art and Artists,” *Evening Star* (Washington, District of Columbia) Sun, Nov 21, 1915, 76.

⁴ *World Biography L-Z* (New York: Institute for Research in Biography, 1948) 3284.

⁵ “Eastern Artists Here,” *The Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, Ohio) Sun, Jun 3, 1917, 53.



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Early in her career, Howell gained the attention of critics who witnessed her artistic growth and the development of her individual style. Her burgeoning success was, "...won through skillful and very spirited interpretations of town scenes done in a manner quite her own, a manner quite engaging."⁶ In 1921, a critic for the *Tampa Bay Times* said that Howell, at just 22 years of age, was, "the youngest artist [to have] really 'arrived' as a modern American artist."⁷

In January of 1921, Howell was working on a painting entitled *Salem Doorways*. Later that year she exhibited paintings depicting Salem architecture including *Rope House—Salem, Mass* and *Peabody House* at Milch Galleries in New York City followed by an exhibit at the Dayton Museum of Art in Ohio. Other artists in the exhibition included Childe Hassam, Charles Hawthorne, Hugh Breckenridge, and Hobart Nichols, among others.⁸ The same year, Howell won the 2nd Hallgarten prize at the National Academy of Design for her painting entitled *October*.⁹

In 1934, Howell married George Webber Mixter, a prominent engineer and yachtsman. At the time, Howell was employed as a supervisor of painting at the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts, known today as Parsons School of Design.¹⁰ Following Mixter's death in 1947, Howell married a second time in 1955. She and her husband W. Findley Downs resided in Cape Ann, Massachusetts.¹¹

During her lifetime, Howell exhibited nationally and internationally. She had five one-woman exhibitions at New York City's Macbeth Gallery. She was a member of the National Academy of Design, the American Watercolor Society, and the Artists Professional League. She received awards including at an exhibition of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors (1916), the 2nd Hallgarten Prize at the National Academy of Design (1921), and a Purchase Prize at the Chicago Art Institute (1927).¹²

⁶ "News and Notes of Art and Artists," *Evening star* (Washington, District of Columbia) Sun, Feb 27, 1916, 75.

⁷ "Two Exhibits on View Here," *Tampa Bay Times* (St. Petersburg, Florida) Tue, Mar 15, 1921, 7.

⁸ "Dayton Art Lovers in High Glee at Present," *Dayton Daily News* (Dayton, Ohio) Sun, Nov 6, 1921, 47.

⁹ "At the Academy," *Brooklyn Eagle* (Brooklyn, New York) Sun, Mar 6, 1921, 70.

¹⁰ "George W. Mixter Weds Miss Felice W. Howell," *Boston Globe* (Boston, Massachusetts) Wed, Aug 1, 1934, 8.

¹¹ "Marriage License Applications," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Thu, Jan 20, 1955, 30.

¹² *World Biography L-Z* (New York: Institute for Research in Biography, 1948) 3284.



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Today her work can be found in collections including the Art Institute of Chicago, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of the City of New York, National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Telfair Museum.