



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art

Edith Frances Marsden (1880-19)

Springtime in the Forest

Oil on board

16 x 12 inches

Signed lower right

Edith Frances Marsden was born in Utica, New York in September 1880. She was the eldest of six children born to John Harold Marsden and Jane (“Jennie”) May Smith. The family soon moved to Pittsfield City in western Massachusetts where Mr. Marsden managed the local wool mill. After completing her own schooling, Edith became a public school teacher by the age of nineteen, a profession she would hold for the remainder of her life while producing paintings in her free time.

Marsden became known in the Northeast for her Impressionist-style landscapes, and showed her paintings at numerous regional art exhibitions: 1929, 19th Exhibition of the Connecticut Academy in the Morgan Gallery of Morgan Memorial; 1931, Contemporary Schools of Art show in the galleries of the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, where she represented the artist colony of Eastport, Maine exhibiting a colorful still life of poppies; 1931, 21st Exhibition of the Connecticut Academy in the Morgan Gallery of Morgan Memorial; 1932, Plainfield Art Association exhibition from the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors at the Plainfield Art Gallery, Public Library; 1942, group show of three women artists at the Argent Galleries in New York where Marsden submitted 24 watercolors. In the latter exhibition, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* commended four particularly “striking” works -- *French Fishing Boats*, *Along the Gaspe*, the “vigorously handled” *Bass Rocks*, and a “nostalgic” *Bridge*, “in which a pleasing note is struck by the simplified forms.”¹

Springtime in the Forest is typical of Marsden’s work in both style and subject. The vivid colors and impressionistic flowing brushwork give a dynamism to this otherwise idyllic scene of a rocky outcrop in a clearing framed by clusters of trees. Marsden brilliantly captures the atmospheric effects of the sunlight as it filters down through the trees onto the forest floor. The bare spindly tree to the left of the composition is a common element among Marsden’s landscapes, which often feature leafless trees with angular bare branches, such as *New England Farm* of 1939 and *Early Spring*.

¹ “Group Shows,” *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (Brooklyn, NY), March 1, 1942.



HAWTHORNE
Fine Art



Edith F. Marsden, *New England Farm*. Oil on canvas, 1939.²



Edith F. Marsden, *Early Spring*. Oil on canvas.³

Though Marsden appears to have spent the majority of her life as a teacher living with her youngest sister, Ruth, in Springfield, Massachusetts the majority of her life, it is likely that she utilized her summers to travel to artist colonies in the Northeast region, painting floral still lifes, as well as landscapes and maritime scenes *en plein air*.

Marsden was associated with various organizations, including the American Artists Professional League, the American Watercolor Society, the New York Water Color Club, and the National Association of Women Artists, Painters, and Sculptors.

Marsden died in March 1946 at her home in Springfield.

² Image courtesy of Live Auctioneers.

³ Image courtesy of AskArt.