



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Paulette Van Roekens (1895-1988)

Artist Paulette Van Roekens was born in France to French and Belgian parents. She immigrated to the United States with her parents while still an infant.¹ She studied at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women under Elliot Dangerfield, Henry Snell and Leopold Seyffert.² Van Roekens was the recipient of two post-graduate fellowships. She further studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.³

In 1917, Van Roekens became a member of the Philadelphia Plastic Club.⁴ In 1922, she was awarded a medal from the Sketch Club for her oil painting entitled “Reminiscences.”⁵ Later the same year, she exhibited with a group of Philadelphia artists at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.”⁶

In 1923, she exhibited a painting entitled *The Doggie Vendor* with the Philadelphia Art Club. The work depicted a hot dog vendor among circus tents and was described in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as, “...gorgeous as an army of joy with banners.” At the Plastic Club, the artist displayed her small oil paintings depicting Philadelphia’s Independence Hall and a view of Glack Street.⁷ Recognized for her street scenes, the artist’s work was purchased that same year by the Pennsylvania Academy where it was to be on permanent display.⁸

In the summer of 1924, Van Roekens contributed two works entitled *City of Tents* and *Venetian Swings* to an exhibition of the Delaware Valley Group.⁹ She later exhibited with the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors. A travelling exhibit, the work was shown in Washington D.C. and in cities throughout the South. Her work displayed at the Philadelphia Art Club was praised by a critic from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The critic stated, “with what genuine poesy [Van Roekens] painted her two

¹ “Two New Exhibits Shown by Museum,” *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, North Carolina) Thu, Nov 4, 1937, 15.

² “Swarthmore Woman’s Club Opens Its Twelfth Annual Exhibit Of Local Paintings,” *Delaware County Daily Times* (Chester, Pennsylvania) Wed, Apr 23, 1947, 15.

³ “Art Association Lists 3 Exhibits,” *Newport Daily News* (Newport, Rhode Island), Thu, Aug 17, 1950, 5.

⁴ “Clubwomen Plan Buy Programmes,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Sun, Oct 28, 1917, 36.

⁵ “The Sketch Club Medal,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Sun, Mar 19, 1922, 53.

⁶ “Attractive Display Made by Philadelphia Painter,” *The Washington Herald* (Washington, District of Columbia) Sun, Jun 18, 1922, 23.

⁷ “Art: A Pair of Club Exhibitions and Some Ancient Windows,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Sun, Nov 11, 1923, 42.

⁸ “Women of Today,” *The Journal and Tribune* (Knoxville, Tennessee) Fri, Mar 16, 1923, 9.

⁹ “Delaware Valley Group Landscapes,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) Sun, Jun 1, 1924, 64.



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simple street scenes, with their car tracks and their curb gossips, and how cool and gracious is her ‘Under the Trees’.”¹⁰

In 1927, Van Roekens married fellow artist Arthur Meltzer.¹¹ Together, with her husband, Van Roekens raised a family while teaching and pursuing a professional art career. She taught painting and drawing at Cheltenham High School and at the Moore Institute.¹² Her husband was the director of Moore’s Fine Art Department.¹³ The couple often exhibited together in galleries and museums throughout the United States.

In 1937, Van Roekens and Meltzer exhibited at the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina.¹⁴ In January of 1938, an exhibition of their work was held in the upper gallery of the Montclair Art Museum.¹⁵ In 1985, a retrospective of the work of Van Roekens and Meltzer was held at the Newman and Saunders Galleries in Wayne, Pennsylvania.¹⁶

During her lifetime, Van Roekens received many awards and prizes including the Plastic Club Gold Medal, the Sketch Club award, the National Association of Women Artists and Sculptors award, the Woodmere Gallery blue ribbon award, and the Pennsylvania Academy Fellowship Award.¹⁷

Paulette Van Roekens Meltzer died in 1988. She was 92 years old.

¹⁰ “Alliance Season Opens Admirably,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Sun, Oct 12, 1924, 60.

¹¹ “A Love Story,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Wed, Mar 5, 1980, 13.

¹² “Paulette Meltzer, 92, artist and art teacher,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Thu, Jan 14, 1988, 18.

¹³ “Paulette Meltzer, 92, artist and art teacher,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Thu, Jan 14, 1988, 18.

¹⁴ “Two New Exhibits Shown by Museum,” *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, North Carolina) Thu, Nov 4, 1937, 15.

¹⁵ “2 Exhibitions Will Be Opened,” *The Montclair Times* (Montclair, New Jersey) Fri, Dec 31, 1937, 4.

¹⁶ “Painting Retrospective,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) Sun, May 12, 1985, 364.

¹⁷ “Swarthmore Woman’s Club Opens Its Twelfth Annual Exhibit Of Local Paintings,” *Delaware County Daily Times* (Chester, Pennsylvania) Wed, Apr 23, 1947, 15.