



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

Maren Margrethe Froelich (1868-1921)

Maren Margrethe Froelich was born in Millerton, Fresno County in 1869 to Danish-born parents Sine Bless and Otto Froelich. The family moved to the San Joaquin valley in 1874, two years after the railroad arrived there. Her father worked as a merchant, a banker, and a postmaster. Froelich's artistic talent was evident from an early age and by the age of 7 her drawings were gaining attention. After receiving her education at Mills Seminary, Froelich moved with her parents to San Francisco in the mid-1880's.¹ She received her formal artistic training in San Francisco at the Mark Hopkins Art Institute.²

In 1891, Froelich exhibited at the spring exhibition of the San Francisco Art Association. The *San Francisco Chronicle* noted that although *Near Monterey* by George Inness was a favorite among viewers, Froelich's *Still Life* was also much admired.³ In 1893, Froelich exhibited her floral works at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.⁴ She exhibited again with the San Francisco Art Association in 1895.⁵ In 1896, Froelich received an honorable mention for drawing at the Hopkins Institute.⁶ It was one of numerous honorable mentions the artist received at the Institute in addition to medals in both drawing and painting.⁷

In 1898, Froelich and artist Alice Chittenden were the first women to exhibit with the Bohemian Club during its annual exhibition.⁸ In 1902, the artist received an assistant professorship at the Mark Hopkins Art Institute.⁹ In this role, Froelich was in charge of the Saturday class and taught children as well as adults. Previously, she was an instructor at the Irving Institute [San Francisco] and gave private lessons.¹⁰ That same year the artist was praised by the *Fresno Morning*

¹ Ernestine Winchell "Fresno Memories," *The Fresno Morning Republican* (Fresno, California), Sun, Sep 2, 1928, 4.

² Ibid

³ "The Opening Night," *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, California), Fri, May 8, 1891, 8.

⁴ "A Fresno Artist," *The Fresno Morning Republican* (Fresno, California), Thu, May 1, 1902, 8.

⁵ "Criticism by Authority," *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, California), Sun, Apr 21, 1895, 9.

⁶ "Horace Platt Awards Medals," *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, California), Wed, May 20, 1896, 16.

⁷ "Gifted Fresno Girl," *The Fresno Morning Republican* (Fresno, California), Fri, Jun 6, 1902, 4.

⁸ "Alice Brown Chittenden," The Society of California Pioneers, accessed Oct. 29, 2021 via <https://www.californiapioneers.org/collections/art/artists/alice-brown-chittenden/>.

⁹ "A Fresno Artist," *The Fresno Morning Republican* (Fresno, California), Thu, May 1, 1902, 8.

¹⁰ "Gifted Fresno Girl," *The Fresno Morning Republican* (Fresno, California), Fri, Jun 6, 1902, 4.



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Republican who said, “Miss Froelich’s ballet girls have become famous, but have had to divide honors with her oils or watercolors of Chinese children. She has done some excellent Chinatown pictures as well as a great variety of landscapes.”¹¹

In October 1905, the *San Francisco Call* said, “Maren Froelich, one of the most interesting women painters hereabouts – and incidentally one of the handsomest as well as clever – holds her fall exhibition of oils and pastels next week...”¹² In December, Froelich held an exhibit of sketches including scenes from Carmel-by-the-Sea and San Francisco, as well as some Chinese subjects and ballet girls at her San Francisco studio.¹³ The same month, Froelich participated in an exhibition of the San Francisco Artist’s Association held at the Palace. Froelich’s *Carmel* was noted among works found to be “Conspicuously good...,” by a critic for the *San Francisco Call*.¹⁴

In 1907, Froelich spent two weeks in New York before sailing to Europe. She spent a year studying in Paris.¹⁵ In 1910, Froelich’s painting entitled *The Chinese Robe* was accepted into the Paris Salon. The painting was displayed in galleries throughout San Francisco before being purchased by a local patron.¹⁶ In 1911, she exhibited scenes from abroad at the Sequoia Club. The *San Francisco Chronicle* said *The Chinese Robe*, “...is charming in contour, color and handling. It is somewhat unique, and displays all the artistry of a well cultivated brush.”¹⁷ In 1912, Rabajohn and Morcom Galleries in San Francisco displayed two studies by Froelich depicting the Paris flower markets.¹⁸

In 1913, Froelich exhibited her work in Los Angeles for the first time. A large exhibition of her work held at Steckel Gallery was comprised of paintings from her time abroad including scenes of Notre Dame, Luxembourg Gardens, the Tuilleries, and Venice. The critic for the *Los Angeles Express* said, “Miss Froelich paints broadly and with high color, striving and securing brilliant sunshine effects but always with a certain subdued blending of color that pleases while it never

¹¹ “Gifted Fresno Girl,” *The Fresno Morning Republican*.

¹² “Local Artists are Discovered,” *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, California), Sun, Oct 1, 1905, 19.

¹³ “Doings in Art Realms,” *Berkeley Daily Gazette* (Berkeley, California), Tue, Dec 5, 1905, 3.

¹⁴ “Recent Picture Show Famous Success,” *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, California), Sun, Dec 24, 1905, 23.

¹⁵ “The Smart Set,” *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, California), Sat, May 4, 1907, 8.

¹⁶ Ernestine Winchell “Fresno Memories.”

¹⁷ “Notes of the Artists,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (San Francisco, California), Sun, Nov 19, 1911, 43.

¹⁸ “News of Art and Artists,” *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, California), Sun, Jun 2, 1912, 46.



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shocks.” Although Froelich spent much of her time abroad she always inscribed ‘California’ after her name when signing her work.¹⁹ At another exhibit at Rabajohn & Morcom Galleries the critic for the *San Francisco Call* described Froelich’s paintings as, “...fresh and vivid interpretations of Paris, of Venice and of California.” The critic praised the artist’s painting of a local subject entitled *Coming through the Lupins* as, “...so good that it is difficult to understand why it has not been sold. Perhaps it is too good.”²⁰

Maren Margretha Froelich died in 1921.

¹⁹ “Fine Pictures Shown By Maren Froelich,” *Los Angeles Express* (Los Angeles, California), Sat, Feb 22, 1913, 9.

²⁰ “News of Art and Artists,” *The San Francisco Call* (San Francisco, California), Sun, Jan 12, 1913, 36.