

Eleanor Parke Custis (28 Jul 1897 – 23 Jul 1983)

Equinox Antiques & Fine Art

Acclaimed 20th Century American woman artist featured in upcoming show

1897—ELEANOR PARKE CUSTIS—1983



RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION
MAY 24–JUNE 21, 1986

MANCHESTER, Vermont -- For the month of July 2005 only, an extensive, privately-held collection of watercolor gouaches by acclaimed 20th century American woman artist Eleanor Parke Custis will be exhibited at Equinox Antiques & Fine Art at 5036 Main Street in Manchester Center.

An opening reception will be held on Saturday, July 2 from 5 to 7:30 p.m. at the gallery when the 33-work collection will be unveiled to the public for the first time ever in Vermont.

Custis - a direct descendent of America's First Lady Martha Washington (and First American President George Washington) - was a pioneer in her chosen medium of watercolor gouache, and traveled extensively throughout New England and overseas.

Gallery owner Mark Reinfurt was attracted to the 20th Century American artist for her "joyful, wonderful, colorful composition and

greatly acknowledged body of artistic work. Custis' works are growing in popularity within private institutions and public collections of merit for their current affordable price to the collecting market."

Reinfurt described Custis as a "consistent, prolific artist who dedicated her life and career to the American 20th century art scene and focused on her uniquely tasteful American feministic worldly style. She was a Renaissance woman with direction and the financial determination to explore her passions."

Custis' works are collected from Maine to California, and a number of esteemed museums and collections and private, well-respected artistic residences.

Eleanor Parke Custis (1897 - 1983) lived through America's Gilded Age and painted scenes as varied as the artist's travels; from her hometown of Washington, D.C., to the coastal towns of New England; from the prosperous fishing villages of Brittany to Venice and the mountain villages and lakes of northern Italy.

She was trained at the Corcoran School of Art beginning in 1915, and studied with Henry Snell during the summers of 1924 and 1925 in Boothbay Harbor, Maine. She was guided and inspired by Impressionist artist Edmund C. Tabrell, one of the Ten American Painters, who became the Corcoran's principal in 1918.

An active member of the Washington arts community, she was an officer of the Washington Watercolor Club and exhibited with the American Watercolor Society, the Vose Galleries in Boston, and in many presentations of the Grand Central Art Galleries in New York. Her last one-woman show there was in April 1945.

In 1933 she sold her paintings at the Grand Central Art Galleries to finance a trip to North Africa, adding to her portfolio of countries that included Holland, northern France, Switzerland, Italy, Egypt, Morocco and Guatemala.

She was also known as a book and magazine cover illustrator, and her woodblock printing-influenced aesthetics popularly employed flat areas of color delineated by dark contours. This technique causes the compositions to move toward the viewer and come alive.

Custis' style captured the scenes of the streets, wharves and dry docks of seacoast villages from Maine to Massachusetts. During her three trips to Europe between 1926 and 1929 she captured bustling street scenes and marketplace views.

A Mediterranean cruise in 1934 introduced her to the Near East, and the bustling, colorful streets and bazaars of Cairo, which added an exotic flair to her paintings.

Gradually Custis moved on to photography, eventually earning her the title of "First Lady of Pictorial Photography" by 1935. She was a woman of change, reinventing her dreams and artistic passions throughout her life.

<http://www.artnet.com/event>

Born in the District of Columbia, Eleanor Custis is directly descended from Martha Washington. In 1915, she enrolled in a 3-year program at the Corcoran School of Art with Edmund Tarbell, and she also studied with Henry Snell.

Widely travelled she did water color sketches in Europe and Guatemala. She was also a successful childrens' book and magazine cover illustrator and belonged to several art associations including the American Watercolor Society, the Washington Watercolor Club the ...

Died Gloucester, Mass.

McMahan, Virgil E. The Artists of Washington, DC, 1796-1996. The Artists of Washington, Washington, DC, 1995.

CUSTIS, ELEANOR PARKE

Painter, illustrator and photographer born in Washington, DC in 1897. She studied privately with Henry B. Snell and at the Corcoran School of Art. She traveled widely throughout her life, recording her impression in oil, watercolor, pastel and gouache, her mature works being in the latter medium. She also produced etchings and illustrations for children's books and national magazines such as Country Life and House Beautiful as well as photography. She was a member and exhibited with the Society of Washington Artists, the Washington Water Color Club and the Arts Club of Washington, serving as an officer of the latter two and the governing board of the former. She also exhibited with the National Association of Woman Painters and Sculptors, the American Water Color Society, the National Arts Club, the Miniature Painters, Sculptors and Gravers Society of Washington, and at the Greater Washington Independent Exhibition of 1935. As the years passed she spent less time in Washington and more time in Gloucester, MA, where she maintained a summer home. She settled permanently in Gloucester in 1960 and died there in 1983. REFS: AAA; ACW 1; BAKKER; FIELDING (as Cutis); GWIE; MALLET 1; NMAA 1; SWA (1922-1931); WBD (192-1948); WWCC (1919-1927).