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DRAWN TO THE LIGHT: WOMEN ARTISTS OF CAPE ANN, 1900-1950 LECTURE FINDING AID & TRANSCRIPT

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Video Description

Presented in conjunction with the Cape Ann Museum's exhibition *The Paintings of Emma Fordyce MacRae* (on display March 1 through July 20, 2008), this video captures a lecture held in the museum auditorium by Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Curatorial Research Associate, Janet Comey. An expert on American art,

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Janet Comey discusses a selection of female painters who had ties to Cape Ann in the early 1900s. As

Comey notes, this was a time when female artists were beginning to gain increased recognition, and some of them were drawn to this area because they found the art environment on Cape Ann more welcoming to women than that of major metropolitan areas such as New York or Philadelphia.

Comey's slides encompass works by Cecilia Beaux, Martha Walter, Felicie Waldo Howell, Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts, Gabrielle de Veaux Clements, Ellen Day Hale, Lilian Westcott Hale, and Theresa Bernstein. At the time of Comey's presentation, she notes that some of these artists are becoming better known in part thanks to institutions such as the Cape Ann Museum that are making a concerted effort to re-look at female artists from this period. Comey's commentary paints a lively and informative picture of these women's personalities and artistic achievements.

Subject list

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Cecilia Beaux | Henry David Sleeper |
| Martha Walter | Gallery-on-the-Moors |
| Felicie Waldo Howell | North Shore Arts Association |
| Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts | Philadelphia School of Design for Women |
| Gabrielle de Veaux Clements | Concord Art Association |
| Ellen Day Hale | Eastern Point |
| Lilian Westcott Hale | Rocky Neck |
| Theresa Bernstein | Folly Cove |
| Emma Fordyce MacRae | American impressionism |
| Janet Comey | |

Transcript

00:13

Linda Marshall

I'm the director of programs here at the museum. And I want to welcome you all this evening to a program which is one in a series of public programs that we're offering in conjunction with our exhibition the paintings of Emma Fordyce MacRae. And just so that you know, that exhibition will be closing on July 20. So that gives you about another week and a half to take a look if you're interested. Right after that we'll be closing down that gallery for a couple of weeks and then the sculpture of James T. McClellan is opening up on August 2. So we are very fortunate to have Janet Comey with us this evening, presenting a lecture entitled *Drawn to the Light: Women Artists of Cape Ann 1900 to 1950*. Janet is Curatorial Research Associate in the Art of the Americas Department of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and she's been on the staff at the MFA since 1991. While at the MFA, she's contributed to many catalogs and publications, including, to name just a few, *The Lore of Italy: American Artists and the Italian Experience 1760 to 1914*; *John Singleton Copley in America*; *A Studio of Her Own: Women Artists in Boston 1870 to 1940*; *The Lane Collection and American Modernism: Georgia O'Keeffe and Her Times*; *Impressionism Abroad: Boston and French Painting*; and *Edward Hopper*, which was published last year. Janet has lectured extensively for the MFA as well as the Tufts University Alumni Association. And I hope you enjoy this evening's lecture. Won't you please join me in welcoming Janet Comey.

02:06

Janet Comey

Thank you, Linda. Good evening.

02:10

In 1930 Alice Judson, New York artist who summered in Gloucester, described Cape Ann in glowing terms. "Gloucester scenery has been made familiar to all lovers of art by paintings that greet the eye in every exhibition throughout the land. For a variety of subjects, it is unrivaled in this country. Boats drift tantalizingly along picturesque wharves; the most gorgeous flowers bloom in its fine atmosphere; surf dashes over magnificent rocks; picturesque streets, woods, and meadows; gay beaches with bathers abound; and models may be found almost anywhere along the waterfront. Over it all is a crystalline sky, and cool ocean breezes temper the heat, while the thermometers in nearby cities are making headlines for the newspapers". So after that lovely description of Gloucester, we know that Gloucester did attract male artists for lots of reasons: one, the hustle and bustle of the town and the harbor; the quality of the light reflected off the surrounding ocean; houses and sailing vessels, the beautiful houses and sailing vessels; granite rock formations; the availability of models, as Alice Judson said; the fact that Cape Ann is cooler, although I don't know whether it has been for the last few days. And all of these attributes of Cape Ann were advertised by the landscape paintings that were exhibited by artists throughout the country. And this is the practice for many of the leading male artists of American

art, Winslow Homer, Frank Duveneck, John Henry Twachtman, Childe Hassam, Maurice Prendergast, John Sloan, Edward Hopper, Stuart Davis, Marsden Hartley.

04:14

But what about the women? What attracted them? Well, the same things. But also I would add, I think, two other things that were especially important to women and why they liked to coming to Gloucester. One was the camaraderie and support that they found here, and two was the chance to exhibit and sell their work in a more welcoming environment than they found in places like New York. Georgia O'Keeffe tells a story of a Philadelphia artist named Arthur Carles coming to see Alfred Stieglitz to borrow some works to stage a modern art show in Philadelphia. Carles inform Stieglitz that he didn't want any "God damn women" in the show. Somehow, I think Cape Ann was more welcoming. In 1925, we'll show you that it was. Of the 384 objects that were exhibited and for sale at the North Shore Arts Association, which was a juried exhibit, 207, well over half, were by women artists, and that was in 1925.

05:28

Following the Civil War, American women aspired to become professional artists in increasing numbers. There had been a lot of amateur artists before this, and it was a well-brought up lady who knew how to play the piano and do her watercolors. But now, partially as a result of the Civil War, because women needed to support themselves and their families, because of the carnage of the Civil War, they wanted to become professional artists. In 1870, the census listed 414 women artists; 20 years later there were 11,000, 11,000 a year, and they were getting their credentials. They were going to school; they were going to the academies. In 1870, 10% of the students in the art academies were women. Twenty years later, half of the students were women. Then, when they finished their studies at the art academies in the United States, most of them went on to Paris for further training. And in Paris they found freedom and responsibility. They were away from their families, so they didn't have the responsibilities that they would have had in their family in living at home. They met other aspiring artists, which was wonderful. They would have kindred souls to work with. And if they were good, they would submit their work to the Salon. And if it were accepted, then they went from being a student to a professional.

07:10

When they came back to the United States, then they entered a lot of juried exhibitions, where they got exposure and sales. They tried different media; they worked in watercolors, pastels, etchings, murals, church decorations. And they tried teaching, and they earned money from teaching. Portraiture was important for women, and women were thought to have a special ability to paint children.

07:43

Today I'm going to talk about eight women artists who painted in Cape Ann during the first half of the 20th century. Like Emma Fordyce MacRae, many of them came from Philadelphia. I'm going to start with Cecilia Beaux. We can't really talk about women on Cape Ann without starting with Cecilia Beaux. She was the most distinguished woman portrait painter in America at the

turn of the last century. She went to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and then finished her studies in Paris. She first visited Gloucester in 1887, staying at the Fairview Inn, and then later started vacationing there regularly. In 1902 she met A. Piatt Andrew, founder of the American Field Service. I probably don't need to tell you about him, but I will anyway. During World War One, Andrew organized more than 1000 ambulances and over 2500 volunteers, and his ambulance corps saved lives and relieved untold suffering. He then served seven terms in the United States Congress, and we remember him every time we go over the bridge over the Annisquam river, which is named for him.

09:06

In 1903 Cecilia Beaux decided to spend her summers in Gloucester. She spent her winters in New York City, where she had a lot of professional obligations, including making weekly trips to Philadelphia to teach at the Pennsylvania Academy. She was probably the first woman anywhere who taught at a major art academy. She built her home called Green Alley on Eastern Point. She was a friend of Henry David Sleeper, the collector and interior designer who lived in Beauport. And together the three of them, A. Piatt Andrew, Sleeper, and Beaux, were magnets for important people to come visit, including Isabella Stewart Gardner, her art advisor Bernard Berenson, and Theodore -- not Theodore -- Franklin Delano Roosevelt came to visit.

09:58

Here we have Green Alley. This is Cecilia Beaux in 1911. And she was 56 years old. Look at the waist on her! She always dressed beautifully in up-to-date styles, maintained her figure, and she lied about her age. And she ignored her birthday. On the right is her studio, where she worked every morning for four hours, a very concentrated work, and it was known that you were not to disturb her while she was working. In fact, her niece one time fell down the stairs in the main house and broke her arm. But rather than disturb Cecilia, she called the doctor and got herself up on her own.

10:58

Now these are two of the more important painting that she painted before she came to Gloucester. She was known for her flowing brushwork, kind of in the manner of John Singer Sargent, and her unconventional compositions. When she wasn't working on commissions, she painted the members of her family, and she called these her *con amore*, or with love paintings. Ernesta, on the left, was her favorite niece and model; she painted her over the years at least nine times. It's a rather daring composition, because she shows us a child's eye view of the nurse's skirt. Ernesta is holding the nurse's hand and we see her child's eye view of the skirt. It's quite a fetching portrait. On the right, is a portrait of her cousin. Beaux recognized that she had made a sort of startling picture. And she gave it a creative title using Spanish diminutives, "Sita" to mean "little one" for the cat and "Sorita" for Sarah. It caused quite a sensation when it was exhibited in New York, and one critic wrote, "I don't see how even Mr. Sargent could paint a portrait with more distinction than that of the woman with the black cat by Miss Beaux".

12:28

These are formidable looking ladies. Beaux was an independent woman who never married and supported herself throughout her life. She admired other strong women. The painting on the right, *Sarah Elizabeth Doyle*, was her first Gloucester commission in 1902. The graduates of Providence High School wanted to honor their principal, and so they commissioned Beaux to paint her portrait. And I think Beaux captured the seriousness of this woman. Doyle also helped establish Pembroke College for women at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design, so she really was quite a woman. On the left is *M. Adelaide Nutting* from 1906, and she traveled from Baltimore to Green Alley for her sittings. This was how important Beaux was at this point that she did have people come from Baltimore up to Cape Ann for their sittings. Nutting was principal and Superintendent of Nursing at Johns Hopkins University Hospital School for Nurses and later the world's first Professor of Nursing at Columbia University. So they were quite amazing women. And Beaux uses touches of red, the background to the Doyle painting and the red notebook that Nutting used for hospital rounds.

14:11

Beaux also painted her Gloucester neighbors. On your left is Thornton Oakley, who had a career as an illustrator. They were great friends, although he was 25 years younger than she. She was said to be heartbroken at his engagement in 1909. But they remained friends thereafter, and he left his family every year and drove her to and from Gloucester from New York. *Leslie Buswell*, on the right, was an ambulance driver for the American Field Service during World War I, and Beaux shows him with the Croix de Guerre Medal that he was awarded in 1915. When she painted this in 1918, he had already endured four years of war service. She gave the portrait to Buswell and his wife as a wedding present.

15:14

These are two more *con amore* paintings, which I think are among her best. The one on the left is Ernesta again that we last saw as a two- or three-year-old. Beaux painted a lot of polished surfaces and white fabrics, very Sargent-like. She painted this just before the outbreak of World War I at sort of the end of the genteel life of the Gilded Age. Ernesta herself was quite beautiful, and it is said that she turned down 50 marriage proposals by the age of 22. In 1915 the Metropolitan Museum bought the painting of Ernesta for \$3,000. On the right is *After the Meeting*, which is a painting of Beaux's friend Dorothea Gilder, and it's after the meeting of some suffragettes. It's an interesting composition. We see Dorothea in profile; and then there are the contrasting patterns, the striped dress and the flowered upholstery of the chair; and then the other women in the background. And I think Beaux used hand gestures to enliven the portraits.

16:37

Now, Beaux is not really a landscape painter, but I think she felt a lot of creative freedom when she was in Gloucester. And so she painted this lush view, called *Half-Tide Annisquam River*, and she captured the reflections of the buildings on the far shore and then, in the foreground, the reflections of the sky. It's almost abstract there in the foreground -- reminds me of Monet's experiments at Giverny when he was painting the pond there.

17:21

Beaux remained for 40 years at Green Alley, and she died in 1942. After 1924 when she broke her hip, she had to curtail her painting, but she did write her autobiography, "Background with Figures", which was published in 1930. But she had many commissions and many honors. She painted or portrayed President Theodore Roosevelt, novelist Henry James, French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau. She gave lectures. She served on juries, often the only woman on the jury. And this is a photo of the Carnegie Institute International Exhibition jury of 1911, where she's surrounded by the leading male artists of the day; she was the only woman ever chosen for the Carnegie jury. In Gloucester she exhibited at the Gallery-on-the- in 1917 her portrait of Leslie Buswell was the center of attention, and she served on the jury in 1922, its last exhibition. She was a founder of the North Shore Arts Association in 1922. She received many honors. She was elected to the full membership of the National Academy of Design and received an honorary degree from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1899 William Merritt Chase called her, "not only the greatest living woman painter but the best that has ever lived." Today, she's less well known than her near contemporary, Mary Cassatt, also from Philadelphia. But recently there has been a spate of books published about her. And there was a traveling exhibition of her work that went to Atlanta, Tacoma and Philadelphia. And in fact, you are having a lecture later on this summer about her, so this was just sort of to get you warmed up for that.

19:26

Now, Martha Walter is another artist who came from Philadelphia, and she was born 20 years after Beaux. She took a similar path to her career. She went to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and then Paris. At the Pennsylvania Academy, she became a protege of William Merritt Chase, the most celebrated art teacher of the day, and he painted this portrait of her. I'm sorry -- it's not a very good slide. I'm sure the original portrait is much better. Chase's enthusiasm was infectious and he brought out the best in his students. And he painted several portraits of both male and female students with affection. At the Academy Martha Walter won the Cresson Travelling Scholarship and went to Europe. She also won the Mary Smith Prize, and you're going to hear about this again. It's for the best painting by a female artist, and this was in one of the annual exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy. Beaux had won this prize four times before that.

20:35

Then when Martha Walter got to Paris, she stayed at the American Girls Art Club, which was established by wealthy expatriate women in the 1890s, because Paris had become such a popular destination for American women art students. It was like a women's dormitory. You had your own room. There was a dining room, reading rooms, and a garden and a safe and supportive atmosphere. But after a while, Martha Walter became disenchanted with the academic training and in Parisian schools. In American art academies the classes were co-ed, except for the life drawing class. But in Paris they were separate schools. There were schools for men and schools for women. So Martha Walter went out and started painting outdoors, like the French impressionists, and she liked to go to the French Atlantic coast, to resorts like Biarritz, and paint.

21:44

From 1906 to 1910 she worked in Philadelphia in the winter and traveled to England, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and Belgium in the summer. She also went to Dalmatia, which is in Croatia, I think, in 1909, where she painted market scenes and fishing boats.

22:06

In 1913 war was brewing, World War I was brewing in Europe, so she couldn't go back to Europe, so she came to Gloucester. And that happened a lot of the times; artists who were used to going to Europe in the summer came to Gloucester. (So, in a way, you benefited from World War I.) Here she painted crowded beach scenes both in watercolor, the one on the left is a watercolor, and in oil. She's famous for her bold brushwork and brilliant splashes of intense color, and she rather joyously recorded Gloucester's summer beach scenes. Cecilia Beaux, impressed by the lightness and airiness of her beach scenes, said, "they seem to have been blown on the canvas."

22:28

Martha Walter also painted the vigorous, working activity of the harbor in this watercolor, showing the boats and the wharves, and then she compresses all of the hauling of the nets, the hard work, into the righthand corner. In this unusual night scene, she paints the glow of interior lights of a Rocky Neck store, and it shows the influence of James McNeill Whistler, who painted similar nocturnal scenes. Whistler was a particular favorite in Philadelphia. His famous portrait of his mother was exhibited there in 1881, with a lot of publicity, and other of his works were shown at the Pennsylvania Academy's Annual Exhibitions from 1893 to 1907. And his works influenced many Philadelphia artists.

23:58

Martha Walter painted beautiful still lives in jewel tone. The woven basket is predominantly emerald green with touches of red, blue, and yellow. She painted it outdoors to capture the dappled sunlight on the grass and the picnic table and the shadows of the trees. And on the right are flowers, and the predominant color here is sapphire blue. But I love the way she put the view of the water outside her studio; the still life shows you where it was painted. She also did lovely figure paintings. The lady knitting outside is a favorite subject of Impressionists, women sitting in a garden sewing, knitting. She looks like she just looked up and is smiling at you. It shows Walter's facility at capturing the transient effects of sunlight, with intense colors and loose brushwork. And on the right is a portrait where Walter borrowed the motifs of Japanese prints: she assumed high vantage points, she eliminated the horizon line, she cropped Chaplin's dress, and she included overhanging branches. These were all motifs from Japanese prints. Like Monet and Sargent, she delighted in the painting of the white skirt in sunlight, brilliant strokes with pigment.

25:43

In 1922 Walter did a series of 55 works, showing the immigrants on Ellis Island, awaiting entry into the United States. Over a period of five months, she took the ferry every day over to Ellis

Island, and she recorded the weariness of thousands of immigrants pouring into the country. This is kind of in stark contrast to the cheerful beach scenes and picnic views. Twenty-two of these island pictures were shown in Paris at the prestigious Georges Petit galleries and then at other American venues. In 1924 intrepid traveler Walter went to North Africa, to Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya and painted views of people in bazaars, streets, shops, and cafes.

26:39

Walter's Gloucester years were small but an important part of her career. She started teaching in Gloucester and then continued later in New York at the New York School of Art. In 1917, she exhibited at the Gallery-on-the-Moors, and in 1919 she had a two-woman show with Felicia Waldo Howell, which received positive reviews and helped to establish her career.

27:09

The Gallery-on-the-Moors was the first official art gallery on Cape Ann, built by William and Emmeline Atwood on Ledge Road in 1916. At first, the Atwoods chose the participants, but later they had a jury system. But it only lasted until 1922, 1916 to 1922. It simply was not large enough for the summer colony, and it was somewhat out of the way. Two organizations were formed to take its place, the North Shore Arts Association, which had juried shows and is on Reed's wharf where it remains today and the Gloucester Society of Artists, which had non-juried shows and sort of petered out in the 1950s. The cartoon from the Gloucester Daily Times has this caption, I don't know whether you can read it or not, but it says, "At the Gallery-on-the-Moors, two of the summer colony admiring a beach scene by Martha Walter." So I love this, because the cartoonist was willing to show the summer folks looking at a woman's painting (so I'm happy about that), and it also shows us that it was important that the summer folk could meet the artists and buy their works and also served as entertainment for the summer colony.

28:40

Martha Walter never married like, like Cecilia Beaux, and she supported herself and all her travels by painting, by selling her paintings, and by teaching. By 1940 she curtailed her travel after she'd been abroad at least 18 times, and spent the rest of her life in Philadelphia's suburbs, working until shortly before her death at 100. Her work may be found in leading museums, including the Pennsylvania Academy, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Musée d'Orsay.

29:17

Now, I wanted to know who this other woman who was in the two-woman show, Felicia Waldo Howell -- I wanted to know about her. And it wasn't easy to find information about her, because she was married twice. And she's in the National Academy. She became a member of the National Academy of Design with her first husband's name, and her obituary in the New York Times is under her second husband's name. So I think that that hurt her in the long run, because there are three different names you have to look her up under. And so she's not as well-known as she might be.

29:58

She was 20 years younger than Walter and very precocious, born in Hawaii, went to the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, and then the Philadelphia School of Design for Women. The Philadelphia School of Design for Women was founded in 1848. And its purpose was to – well, originally, it had a textile major to train women in art and design for the textile industry. But its aim, then and now, was so that women could earn a living.

30:36

Felicia Waldo Howe won a scholarship to study with Henry Snell, one of her teachers at the Philadelphia School, in St. Ives in Cornwall, England for the summer of 1914, and the next summer Martha's Vineyard, also with Henry Snell. Now, World War I happened, so Henry Snell held his summer schools in Gloucester from 1916 to 1920. And so, many of his students later made Gloucester their summer colony because of Henry Snell.

31:10

We have a letter in the MFA files, because we have one painting by Felicia Howell. And in it she explains that she spent the summers of 1912 and '13, when she was only a teenager, in Annisquam, painting. And her first exhibited painting at a professional exhibition was done in Annisquam in 1913, when she was 16 years old, so she really was precocious. She summered in Gloucester in the '20s and the '30s. Her residence from 1925 to 1933 was at 17 Wonson Street on Rocky Neck. She exhibited at the Gallery-on-the-Moors, the Sargent Murray Gilman House, the Orchard Gallery in East Gloucester, and the North Shore Arts Association. She began giving classes in Gloucester. She also, like Walter, later taught at the New York School of the Fine Arts. Howell received the prestigious Hallgarten Award from the National Academy of Design for a painting of Rocky Neck actually.

32:18

In this painting here -- this is actually a gouache, which is opaque watercolor. And she shows the modern bustling city with delivery trucks and buggies and telephone poles with wires crossing everywhere. And I'm told, this is a view towards the corner of Porter Street in the former downtown area not far from the present-day Duncan Street. And the large framed structure at the end with the cut corner was Eli Stacy's residence when it was located on Main Street in the West End. It survived the conflagration of 1830 and was moved to this intersection on Roger Street and remodeled in the 1860s. (I don't know if that's all true or not.)

33:07

She also painted more normal subjects. Gloucester harbor, again a gouache, is a very quiet scene. There's no human activity. We have a high horizon line, so we are looking down at the water and the reflections. It's very decorative. It's almost an arbitrary choice of colors and a limited number of colors. And this painting probably looks familiar to you, because it belongs to the Cape Ann Museum. It was the dedication of the cenotaph that's on the base of the Joan of Arc equestrian sculpture in Legion Square, which includes the names of the local men who fought in World War I. There was supposed to be a dedication of both the Joan of Arc, the sculpture, and the bass at the same time, but there was a problem with the foundry, and so the

sculpture was not ready on time. But the dedication seems to have been quite a success anyway. Howell captured the crowds and the bunting and the flags and the fire lights in this night scene. Night scenes were sort of a specialty for her. In 1932 she had an entire exhibition of nocturnal paintings of New York City.

34:32

She lived in New York City for most of her life, married a yachtsman, and lived on a yacht in the summer, cruising up and down the east coast painting lighthouses, but she eventually settled in Rockport and lived there year-round. She was elected a full member of the National Academy and her work is in the MFA, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Met. I mean, in others, too, but that's a sample of where her work is.

35:01

Now this is Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts. Unlike Walter, who painted festive, crowded beach scenes, Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts painted lush, sparsely populated beaches at low tide. She also was from Philadelphia, also went to the Pennsylvania Academy, also won the Mary Smith Prize, and also studied in Paris. But she was from a wealthy family, so she got to stay in Europe for 10 years. Then she settled in Concord, Massachusetts and helped found the Concord Art Association. And she was independently wealthy, so she bought a historic house and hired a woman architect to renovate it for the Concord Art Association's home.

35:55

She summered in West Gloucester on Coffin's Beach with her partner, Grace Keyes, who was a champion golfer, and painted serene beach views at Wingaersheek Beach. Contemporary critics called them "charming in their hazy simplicity with a hint of Whistler." So I've shown you a Whistler here for comparison. This is another. It's amazing to me how much space she gets into her paintings. She loved to paint the changing light effects on the wet sand with very fluid brush strokes and subtle color. A fellow painter said she painted "like a man – slap, dab, fast and large and it's done." That was always considered a compliment to a woman. But she didn't always paint beaches. She also painted landscapes. She painted some lovely landscapes of Annisquam. And if you're ever at the Concord Public Library, you can see some -- there's a lovely painting of Annisquam in there and some of her other work.

37:16

She was also very philanthropic. During World War I she wanted to join the Red Cross but did not pass the physical, so she painted sketches of Concord women sewing for the soldiers. And she sold these and other paintings for \$10,000 which she used to buy an ambulance, and she paid for the driver and the upkeep. Unfortunately, she suffered from depression. And it worsened in 1925. She was hospitalized and told she had to give up painting. In despair over having to stop what meant the most to her, she hanged herself in 1927 at the age of 56. Her work is in the Gardner Museum (and there's a letter in archives that is a thank you note that she wrote to Mrs. Gardner saying thank you for buying my painting), in the MFA and in the Pennsylvania Academy,

among other places. She exhibited at the Gallery-on-the-Moors in 1917 and was a member of the North Shore Arts Association from 1923 until her death.

38:26

Now, this painting you'll all recognize, and it's actually right there. And also having it right there, you realize that this is too blue. And that's what the painting looks like. This famous image is a group of artists – well, not all artists but mostly artists. And it illustrates one of the chief advantages of Cape Ann and that's the camaraderie that made creation of art a pleasure. It was a collaborative process in Folly Cove, at the home of Ellen Day Hale, who was the daughter of clergyman and author Edward Everett Hale, and her companion Gabrielle Clements, who began living there in the 1880s. This painting is by Theresa Bernstein. And I'll just point out who everybody was. The woman leaning forward, gesticulating with her right hand and talking to the hostess, is Ellen Day Hale. And the woman that she's talking to, with her back toward us, is Gertrude Stanwood who was also the hostess and an artist. Next to Ellen Day Hale is Margaret Hoyt, who also was a painter and an etcher. Lilian Westcott Hale, with her hand braced to her chin, is talking to Gabrielle Clements on her right. The occasion was an elderberry wine party at the Folly Cove home of artist William Stanwood.

40:13

Now, Lilian Westcott Hale was married to Ellen Day Hale's younger brother, Philip, who was also an artist. Lilian and Philip lived in Dedham, Massachusetts and frequently visited Folly Cove in the summers. And when Ellen Day Hale died, she left her studio to Lilian. When Bernstein painted this canvas, she and her husband, William Meyerowitz, were guests of the Hale family in a cottage on the Folly Cove property. Ellen Day Hale and Gabrielle Clements often work together in Folly Cove on projects with a group of women artists. Lilian Hale's daughter, Nancy, described the working atmosphere: "Here at Aunt Nelly's, for the first time I saw art lived corporately, a shared vocation to be embarked on daily with cries of joy. If a church decoration were underway, Miss Clements and the other old maids might all work on it. Another year it might be etching they worked on. Afterward they all clustered around to examine critically the result achieved. The atmosphere was brisk, fresh and precise."

41:21

Now I'm going to discuss four of these women, Gabrielle Clements, Ellen Day Hale, Lilian Westcott Hale, and Theresa Bernstein. Gabrielle Clements is best known for church murals and etchings (I'm showing you an etching here), but she was also a painter and a teacher. She graduated from Cornell University in 1880. (No slouch there.) Then she went to the Philadelphia School of Design for Women and the Pennsylvania Academy and Paris, and she won the Mary Smith Award. Then she taught at Bryn Mawr, a school for girls in Baltimore. She began visiting Cape Ann in the 1880s and bought an old house in 1884 at Folly Cove and later moved it back from the street and added a huge studio. She was part of the American etching revival of the 1880s, and she learned etching from Stephen Parrish. And if he sounds familiar, he worked in Annisquam and was the father of Maxfield Parrish.

42:31

This etching is also known as *The Return -- Gloucester, Massachusetts* and you can see the boat coming from the lower left and other sailors sailing vessels returning to the harbor. So she's emphasizing the working aspects of the harbor. You can see the influence of Whistler with the high horizon line and the cropping of the boat. In 1885 Ellen Day Hale wrote an article about the local granite industry, and Clements illustrated it with her etchings. This was for Harper's Weekly. Clements taught Ellen Day Hale and other women how to etch, and it was a wonderful way for them to earn a living. They traveled quite a bit, and their etchings and drawings they sold for under \$50, and they were able to support themselves for their entire adult lives. In the 1920s Clements and Hale and Margaret Hoyt and Theresa Bernstein and William Meyerowitz experimented with color etching. Gabrielle Clements exhibited at the Rockport Art Association, Folly Cove Etchers, and the North Shore Arts Association.

43:52

Now, her companion, Ellen Day Hale -- this is a self-portrait. She was not born in Philadelphia. She was born in Worcester. She studied in Boston but before the Museum School opened, so she studied privately with William Morris Hunt and William River, so she needed life drawing classes. So she had to go to the Pennsylvania Academy for her life classes. Then she traveled in Europe and studied in Paris. She's noted for her portraits and her figure studies, but she also did landscapes, etchings, and murals. She taught classes. She wrote articles; when she was in Paris, she wrote a series of articles for the Boston Traveler about what it was like to be a woman art student in Paris, which was very helpful to other women who were going to go over and do that. And she also wrote a treatise on Renaissance artists. She and Clements were lifelong companions and traveled extensively. At one point they went to Palestine, because they were preparing a church mural, and they needed to go to Palestine.

45:10

This self-portrait was the last work that she did in Paris, and she shows herself as a self-possessed, serious woman but not as an artist. You might gather that she was an artist from her graceful hand that she shows sort of prominently. But she depicts herself as a well-dressed, upper class woman. The canvas is horizontal, which is slightly unusual for a portrait. Usually they're vertical. But she shows herself as self-confident and sort of androgynous. The point is not her gender but her selfhood. She's become sort of the poster child for the rise of women artists. This portrait was on the cover of a 2001 book about women artists and the development of modern American art. When it was exhibited in 1886, a reviewer wrote that "she displays a man's strength in the treatment and handling of her subjects, a massiveness and breadth of effect attained through sound training and native wit and courage. Her portrait of herself is refreshingly unconventional and lifelike."

46:26

By the time 1905, when she painted *Morning News*, Impressionism was the dominant style. And so she painted with a lighter palette and looser brushstrokes. We're also reminded of Vermeer here. Vermeer, the 17th century Dutch artist, had recently been rediscovered. He often painted

women in interiors with sunlight streaming in from the window, and he was a favorite of the Boston School. Here, Ellen Day Hale balanced the light and dark areas and she painted the woman in light tones, so she would stand out from the dark background. Hale also painted landscapes, and they're also in an impressionist style. You can see the little white and yellow dabs suggesting flowers and a tremendous variety of green vegetation. I think you feel that she loved this landscape. And there's a little bird on the rocks there –sort of enlivens it.

47:38

Hale was the only daughter and the oldest of nine children. And her mother was an invalid, so she often had to help with the family. From 1904 to 1909 her father was appointed chaplain of the US Senate, and she moved to Washington to be with him to act as his hostess. So she didn't always have a lot – but she did manage to do a few portraits in Washington. But she summered in Folly Cove until her death in 1940. She spent her winters after Washington in Brookline. She exhibited widely at the Paris Salon, the Gloucester Society of Artists, the Rockport Art Association, and the North Shore Arts Association, which gave her a memorial exhibition after her death.

48:26

Lilian Westcott Hale -- She was 25 years younger than Ellen and married to Ellen's younger brother Philip. She was born in Hartford and never studied in Philadelphia. She studied with William Merritt Chase in Shinnecock on Long Island in 1897 and won a scholarship to the Boston Museum School, where she studied with Edmund Tarbell. In 1901 she married Philip Hale, who was a teacher at the Boston Museum School. When she graduated in 1904, they both got studios, separate studios in the studio building -- separate but equal.

49:12

But after her daughter was born in 1909, (and this is the first one of the artists we discussed today that has had children) she had a studio in her home. In order to be an artist, a wife, and a mother, she used her daughter as a model, and this is her daughter in one of her exquisite charcoal drawings. She made these with French charcoal sharpened to an exquisite point and then she made long thin vertical strokes. And this is sort of a very idiosyncratic style. She considered these not preparatory drawings. These were finished works of art for her, and her first solo exhibition consisted entirely of drawings like this. And you see that the dress for (the baby's name was Nancy) --the dress for Nancy is actually just paper showing through. It's plain paper and then all the floral decoration around it.

50:30

This is another drawing that she added also, not just charcoal, but colored pencil. It's a combination of still life and landscape seen through the window. A series – part of a series of beautiful still lives that she began in 1923. Again, this was completed in her home so that she could fulfill the duties to her daughter and her husband. Another beautiful drawing from 1907. The veiled model here is contemplating a ring box. The model was Rose Zeffler or Zeffy, and there's a whole series of elegant drawings done of Zeffy. Another artist gave Lillian Hale these

wonderful hats and cloaks. And then she used those to dress the model, and I love the way she did the fur trim here and the striking image. Just as she had painted her children, she painted her grandchildren. This is her grandson in front of an antique screen in her Folly Cove studio in 1943. That had been Ellen Day Hale's studio; she had willed it to Lilian Hale. While he was posing, somebody read boy's tales of the sea to him. He's dressed up in a sailor's suit. But we also have to remember this was 1943, and there were real naval battles underway at the same time.

52:05

Lilian Hale was a very successful artist. She was a better artist than her husband, and everybody seemed to agree with that -- even he. She was elected a full member of the National Academy of Design in 1931. Her husband was only an associate member. She exhibited widely, and she won many prizes, including many gold medals. Her work is in the MFA, the Met, and the Pennsylvania Academy.

52:35

Now our last artist is Theresa Bernstein. Both Lilian Westcott Hale and Theresa Bernstein were married to artists, and their husbands were relatively supportive. But their styles were totally opposite. Hale has a very elegant, refined, understated style. Bernstein was bold, expressive, and colorful. She was known as an urban realist, and she loved to paint crowd scenes. She's less well known but did a lot of etching. She did some murals and over 150 portraits. This self-portrait she did after attending the Armory Show in 1913. The Armory Show was an exhibition that was seen in New York, Boston, and Chicago, and it introduced modernism to the American public. It had Picasso and Matisse, and it thoroughly shocked the general public, but it challenged and fascinated American artists. And this was Bernstein's reaction. She painted her own portrait with strong brushstrokes and bright colors.

53:50

Bernstein was from Philadelphia, went to the Philadelphia School of Design for Women, and then she studied with William Merritt Chase in the Art Students League, and she settled in New York. When she was submitting her paintings, she signed them "T. Bernstein", so she was on to the way women were treated. So when she was submitting them to a juried exhibition, that's what she did. She loved to paint crowds of people in public places: on beaches, in trains, in concerts, parades, anywhere there was a public spectrum. In 1916 her colleague Isabel Vernon Cook told her about Gloucester, so, by herself, that summer she took the train up to Gloucester.

54:34

In 1919 she married William Meyerowitz, and they both became fixtures in Gloucester for the summers. She retained her maiden name. Quite amazing in 1919. Once Josephine Hopper was complaining that Edward Hopper's career had pretty much obliterated hers, and Bernstein said, "Why don't you use your maiden name?"

55:00

This painting is of Gloucester from 1920. And it seems if she liked crowds of people, it looks like she liked crowds of buildings, too. But I think it conveys the vitality and personality of the city through the mass of houses and warehouses and ship **mounds**. She also was intensely interested in the life around her. She painted these fishermen with a kind of earthy vigor, using expressive brushwork and color. But in spite of the broad brushwork, it's specific enough to determine that all of the figures are focused intently on the fellow in the yellow shirt. So it's not a random group of fishermen. It's cohesive and something is actually transpiring.

55:55

Our last slide is called *The Art Party*. And the art party was at the Hawthorne Inn in 1923. And I think it emphasizes the coming together of the summer folks dressed in their brightly colored dresses and fancy hats and the artists. It's art as entertainment. And it was one – no, it *is* one of the chief attractions of Cape Ann. Bernstein lived a remarkably long life. She died at 111. But she did not want her longevity to overshadow her accomplishments as an artist. She had over 40 one-woman shows. And she's represented in the Met, the Phillips Collection, and the Art Institute. She also taught in Gloucester from 1932 to 1969. And she published a book about her husband. She wrote the history of Cape Ann artists and the History of the North Shore Arts Association, among other things.

57:02

Now, the image of the art party is sort of an appropriate image to conclude this discussion. The eight women that we've seen were very accomplished artists. They were all educated in the top academies; most went to Paris. They maintained vigorous exhibition schedules, and they won many prizes. Six taught either in their own schools or in existing academies. Three were full members of the National Academy of Design. Two are quite well-known, Cecilia Beaux and Theresa Bernstein. Lilian Hale and Ellen Hale are becoming better known, since their work has been displayed in the last few decades. Clements, Elizabeth Wentworth Roberts, Felicia Waldo Howe, and Martha Walter are less well known, but hopefully their work will receive the attention that deserves in the near future. And finally, I'd like to say that we owe the Cape Ann Museum a debt of gratitude for its role in bringing women artists to our attention. In recent years, they've exhibited the work of Theresa Bernstein, Nell Blaine, Rosamond Smith Bouvé among others, including the two shows currently on view, Emma Fordyce MacRae and Eleanor Parke Custis. Thank you.

58:33

Any questions? There were lots of other women I could have chosen. Yes.

58:46

Audience Member

What surprises did you find in your research?

58:51

Janet Comey

Oh, that's a good -- What surprises did I find in my research? Well, I guess I was surprised that there wasn't more known about a lot of these women. Felicia Howe was very hard to find information on. Martha Walter, the second woman I showed you, I thought was a terrific artist, and there was one article about her and one book with very bad reproductions that was by a dealer. So I guess it's the lack of information, and you have to think about the fact that a lot of these women -- the critics were not kind, always, to these women. So we really need to go back and look at their work freshly and decide how good it was. And I think that's, with feminist art history happening now, a lot of their work is being researched. So I think over the next few years, we'll find out more about them, and then we'll be able to make better judgments. Ellen Day Hale's self-portrait, the horizontal one -- when that was first shown, maybe 20 years ago, nobody had ever heard of her. But then it was shown and the value of her work went up, and then it was shown again, and the value of her work went up some more. So it's always helpful, not only that Cape Ann is showing the work of these women, but also when the MFA did *A Studio of Her Own* -- that was a boon to the women's work.