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COLLECTIONS

VOLUME 3 MAY 2010

Anne Lyman Powers: Mid-century Expressionist



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Prints, Drawings, Watercolors and Sculpture*

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COVER **The Big Wind, 1961**
Oil on canvas

40 X 48 INCHES
Signed and dated lower left.

COLLECTIONS

Anne Lyman Powers: Mid-century Expressionist

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COLLECTIONS

VOLUME 3

Anne Lyman Powers

Mid-century Expressionist

Museum School Boston Works & Beyond

GALLERY EXHIBITION
MAY 17-JULY 31, 2010

*Anne Lyman Powers: Mid-century Expressionist
Museum School Boston Works & Beyond*



COLLECTIONS

LEFT **The Dancing Bear** DETAIL
Circa 1950-52
Oil on canvas

40 X 36 INCHES
Signed lower right.

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Childs Gallery Collections is the newest publication in a tradition of more than seventy years of gallery publications. *The Childs Gallery Bulletin* (begun 1950), the *Print Annual* (begun 1976) and the *Painting Annual* (begun 1980) have been firmly established and are represented in almost every fine arts library in the country. As early as the mid-1940s, however, Childs Gallery presented a publication entitled *Currier and Ives Prints: A Collection...* which represented the carefully considered collection of a single owner with Charles D. Childs' commentary that "we cannot recall that a representative collection of these lithographs has been shown in Boston for many years."

We continue to celebrate collections, collecting, and collectors as a pivotal axis of the art world with this third Volume of *Childs Gallery Collections—Anne Lyman Powers: Mid-century Expressionist*. Childs Gallery has represented Anne Lyman Powers since 2003.



Anne Lyman Powers: Mid-century Expressionist *Museum School Boston Works & Beyond*

Anne Lyman Powers was born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts. An early interest in the arts led her to study at various institutions, including the Winsor School, Vassar College, Columbia University, and the progressive School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

While Powers enjoys painting realistic subject matter, including the New England landscape and the athlete in motion, her sense of composition, color relationships, and texture lean toward the abstract. For Powers, the pleasure and interest she takes in painting is derived from the tension that exists between realism and abstraction - “realist abstraction or abstract realism”. By striving to marry these two aspects, Powers seeks to “make possible and enhance a feeling, an experience or a statement about the world...or about the human condition”.

This philosophy was especially apparent when, as a young artist, Powers embarked on a series of politically charged expressionist works that would be her signature for decades. Touring Europe on a family summer vacation in 1937, 15-year-old Anne Lyman (Powers) got a firsthand glimpse of pre-war Nazi Germany, which she later called a horrible “dress rehearsal” for what was to come. That same year, Munich featured two infamous art shows: one that Adolf Hitler approved, the other branded “Degenerate.” The Boston teenager viewed both with alarm.

“The question of why dictators feared modern art became important to me,” says Powers. “I needed to understand why Hitler would hate the painting of a black square on a white background by Malevich or a colorful expressionist landscape by Nolde. The political drama haunted me then and still does.”

That experience, along with frequent exposure to the Paris avant-garde, strongly influenced Powers’ artwork from the 1940s through the ‘60s, which blended elements from “a bit of surrealism, a bit of pop, and a bit of abstract expressionism”. Alternately witty and moving, her subject matter conveys biting social and political commentary in vividly colorful scenes that dominate every inch of the canvas. They were hardly the pretty still lifes one might expect from a well-bred recent Vassar graduate.

Powers’ extensive travels and fine art education served as ideal preparation for her future as a fearless painter. She mastered sculpting in college, later evident in the three-dimensionality of her figures; observed Salvador Dali’s surrealism at the 1939 World’s Fair; and studied Matisse’s bold use of saturated colors while in France. Above all, Powers was in the right place at the right time when she entered Boston’s Museum School in 1945, coinciding with teachers including Ben Shahn, Arthur Polonsky, and painting department head Karl Zerbe.

A German expatriate, Zerbe saw his early paintings destroyed by the Third Reich after being consigned to the “Degenerate” art show that so horrified Powers on her first trip to Munich. Along with Hyman Bloom and Jack Levine, the German expatriate and fellow participant in the “Degenerate” art show, Zerbe became known as a Boston Expressionist, rejecting Pollock-type abstraction in favor of story-telling figurative subjects, a style embraced by Powers. She recalls that, “While Zerbe leaned over backwards not to talk about his own history as a political refugee, there was a strong Jewish presence at school,” such as classmate David Aronson. “People reacted very emotionally to the times, which I think led them away from abstract compositions. There’s no humanism in them.”

That certainly cannot be said of Powers’ paintings of the period. In “Punch & Judy,” the cruel puppets known for anti-Semitic and racist skits engage a rapt audience of impressionable children. The absurdist bacchanal in “Dancing Bear,” complete with harmonica-playing grizzly on roller skates, reflects a dissolute society sadly aware of the looming war.

Powers liked to portray the working classes with a delicate poignancy or amused affection, but she also poked fun at human foibles. The larger-than-life “Fortune Teller” looks as ridiculous as her predictions of true love and vast wealth for every paying customer, while a fiddle-playing “Nero” lovingly caresses his wine goblet dressed in the colors of Rome’s burning flames behind him.

Under Zerbe’s tutelage, Powers mastered the difficult medium of encaustic along with oils to convey her strong ideology. “I was always pushing myself to create bolder colors,” she says. “I think my obsession came from a lack of color around our house growing up. My father was color-blind and we were constantly surrounded by neutrals.”

Neutral is the last word anyone would use to describe Powers’ wickedly intelligent mid-century works.

RICHARD J. BAIANO

LEFT **Punch and Judy** DETAIL
Circa 1948-49
Oil on canvas

47 X 38 INCHES
Signed lower right. Titled verso.
School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston label verso. (Karl Zerbe instructor).



1



2

1
Woman with Jerusalem Cherry Plant and Pears
1948

Oil on canvas

36 X 24 INCHES

Signed and dated upper right.

2
The French War Veteran at Peace
1952

Oil on canvas

24 X 36 INCHES

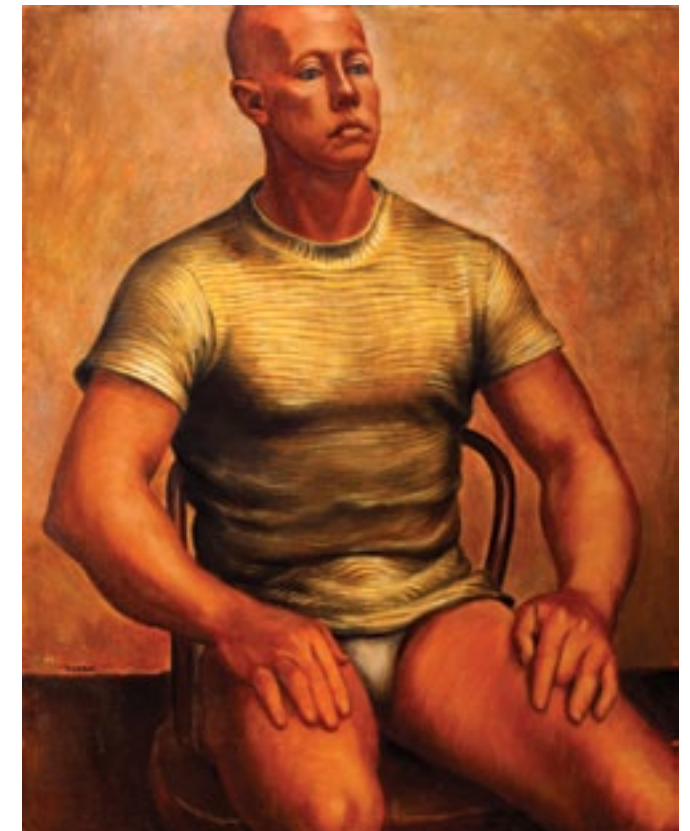
Initialed and dated lower left.

3
Seated Museum School Model
1948

Oil on masonite

30 1/8 X 23 7/8 INCHES

Signed lower left. Signed and dated verso.



3



4

4
A Woman in a Black Coat
1949

Oil on canvas

20 X 15 INCHES

Signed and dated upper right.



5

5
Woman in Orange and Green
Circa 1952-3

Oil on canvas

30 X 15 INCHES

Signed lower left.

6
The Cock Fighters or 3 Figures with Roosters
Circa 1948

Oil on canvas

52 1/2 X 34 INCHES

Signed lower right.

School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston label verso.
(Karl Zerbe instructor).



6



7
The Stoker
1948
 Encaustic on canvas
 30 X 24 INCHES
 Signed and dated lower right.



9
Two Partisans
Circa 1948-49
 Encaustic on canvas
 36 X 40 INCHES
 Signed lower left. Inscribed verso.

10
Portrait of Milovan Djilas
Circa 1952, 1953-54
 Oil on panel
 33 1/8 X 21 5/8 INCHES
 Signed and dated lower left. Titled verso.



8
Three War-Time Farmers with Scythes
1955
 Encaustic on canvas
 48 X 36 INCHES
 Titled, signed, and dated lower right.



11

11
The Three Fates
Circa 1970
 Oil on canvas
 36 X 48 INCHES

12
The Fortune Teller
Circa 1948-50
 Oil on masonite
 36 X 24 INCHES
 Titled, signed, and dated verso.



12



13

13
Harlequins and their Puppet
Circa 1947-48

Gouache on board

12 X 18 INCHES



14

14
Nero
Circa 1948

Oil on masonite

21 X 16 7/8 INCHES

Signed verso.

15
Clown
Circa 2007

Oil on canvas

34 X 23 3/4 INCHES

Signed lower right.



15



16



17

16
New York Bridges
Circa 1948

Gouache on board

20 X 27 7/8 INCHES

Signed lower left.

This was a Museum School exercise for a mural study.

17
The Hollow Men
Circa 1948-50

Encaustic on canvas

30 X 30 INCHES

18
A Model in Black and White
Circa 1948

Oil on masonite

24 X 17 7/8 INCHES

Verso bears an additional painting of a seated woman with crossed arms.



18

19
Head of a Man
Circa 1948

Ink wash and gouache on paper

23 1/2 X 17 3/4 INCHES

Numbered lower right.

A study for *A Model in Black and White*.



19



20

20
Woman with a Birdcage
Circa 1948

Lithograph

15 1/4 X 9 5/8 INCHES

Signed in pencil lower right. Numbered verso.



21

21
Portrait of a Man with a Cigarette
Circa 1949

Scratchboard drawing on wax paper

13 7/8 X 10 7/8 INCHES

Signed lower right.



22

22
Europa
Circa 1964

Pen and ink wash

11 7/8 X 18 1/8 INCHES

Dated upper right; numbered lower right.

23
The King of the North
Circa 1948

Drypoint

20 5/8 X 16 7/8 INCHES

Signed in pencil lower right; titled in pencil lower left.
Numbered verso.



23

LIST OF WORKS

All available works are listed in title order.

Works illustrated in this catalogue include an **image** number and page number.

COA Collection of the artist. Please inquire.

TITLE	IMAGE	PAGE	RETAIL
<i>A Model in Black and White</i>	18	19	\$4,000
<i>A Woman in a Black Coat</i>	4	10	\$5,000
<i>Clown</i>	15	17	COA
<i>Deposition</i>		Back Cover	\$25,000
<i>Europa</i>	22	21	\$2,400
<i>Harlequins and their Puppet</i>	13	16	\$2,500
<i>Head of a Man</i>	19	19	\$1,800
<i>Nero</i>	14	16	\$5,600
<i>New York Bridges</i>	16	18	\$3,600
<i>Portrait of a Man with a Cigarette</i>	21	20	\$1,200
<i>Portrait of Milovan Djilas</i>	10	13	\$6,500
<i>Punch and Judy</i>		6	\$30,000
<i>Seated Museum School Model</i>	3	9	\$6,000
<i>Still Life with Smelts</i>	24	22	\$2,500
<i>The Big Wind</i>		Front Cover	\$30,000
<i>The Cock Fighters or 3 Figures with Roosters</i>	6	11	\$18,000
<i>The Dancing Bear</i>		4	COA
<i>The Fortune Teller</i>	12	15	\$9,500
<i>The French War Veteran at Peace</i>	2	9	\$6,500
<i>The Hollow Men</i>	17	18	\$7,500
<i>The King of the North</i>	23	21	\$450
<i>The Snow Bird</i>		Inside Back Cover	\$9,000
<i>The Stoker</i>	7	12	\$7,500
<i>The Three Fates</i>	11	14	\$25,000
<i>Three War-Time Farmers with Scythes</i>	8	12	\$20,000
<i>Two Partisans</i>	9	13	\$18,000
<i>Woman in Orange and Green</i>	5	10	\$4,500
<i>Woman with a Birdcage</i>	20	20	\$300
<i>Woman with Jerusalem Cherry Plant and Pears</i>	1	8	\$6,000

24
Still Life with Smelts
Circa 1960-70
Oil on canvas
8 X 24 INCHES



Anne Lyman Powers
The Snow Bird, Circa 1948

Encaustic on canvas
30 X 25 INCHES

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Anne Lyman Powers
***Deposition*, Circa 1948-49**
Encaustic on canvas

38 X 40 INCHES
School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston label verso.

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