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# COLLECTIONS

VOLUME 3 MAY 2010

**Anne Lyman Powers: Mid-century Expressionist**



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ESTABLISHED 1937

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169 Newbury Street  
Boston, MA 02116  
617-266-1108  
617-266-2381 fax  
childsgallery.com  
info@childsgallery.com

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COVER **The Big Wind, 1961** 40 X 48 INCHES  
Oil on canvas Signed and dated lower left.

## COLLECTIONS

*Anne Lyman Powers: Mid-century Expressionist*

Editor: Richard J. Baiano  
Assistant Editor: Stephanie V. Bond  
Staff: Gina Canning, Zachary Dornier, Nicholas DiStefano, Kathryn Fields,  
John Hamilton, Stephanie Hackett and Sally Norton  
Photography: Darren Stahlman|[darrenstahlmanphotography.com](http://darrenstahlmanphotography.com)  
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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*

CHILDS GALLERY  
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169 NEWBURY STREET BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02116-2895



## 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**

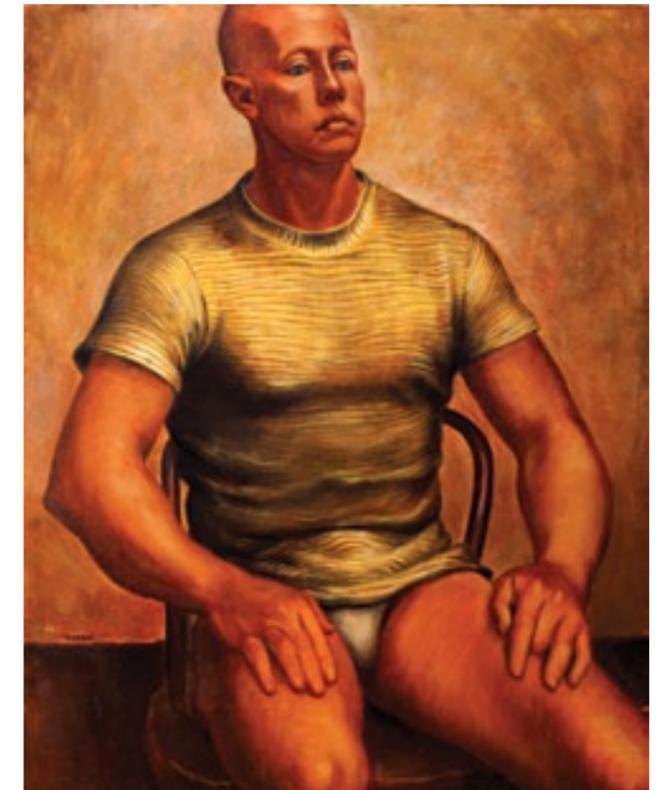
Oil on canvas  
36 X 24 INCHES  
Signed and dated upper right.

**2**  
**The French War Veteran at Peace**  
**1952**

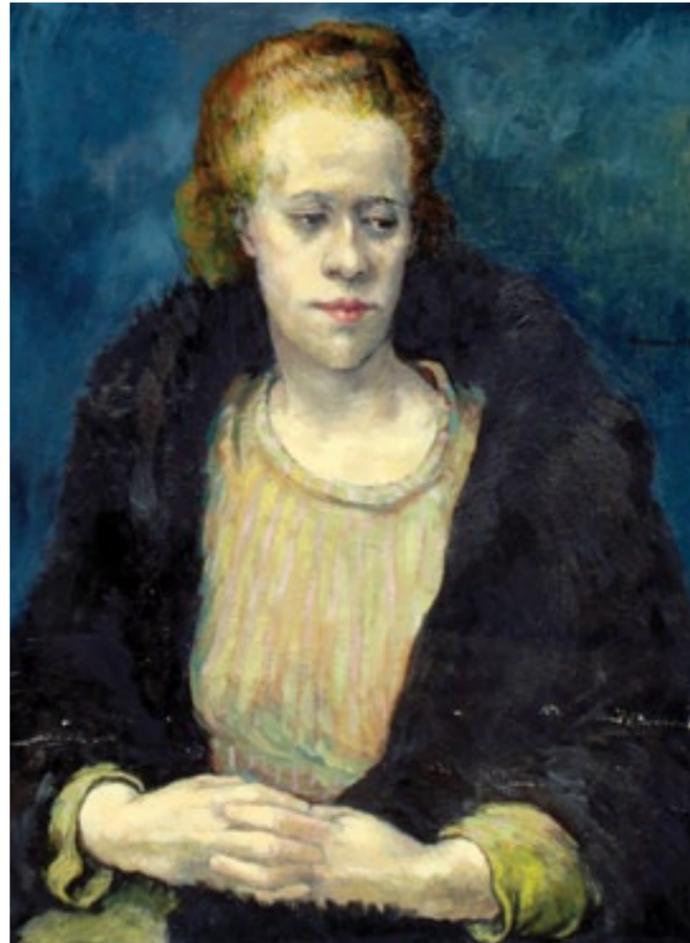
Oil on canvas  
24 X 36 INCHES  
Initialed and dated lower left.

**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.

7



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

9



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

8

**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.



10



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



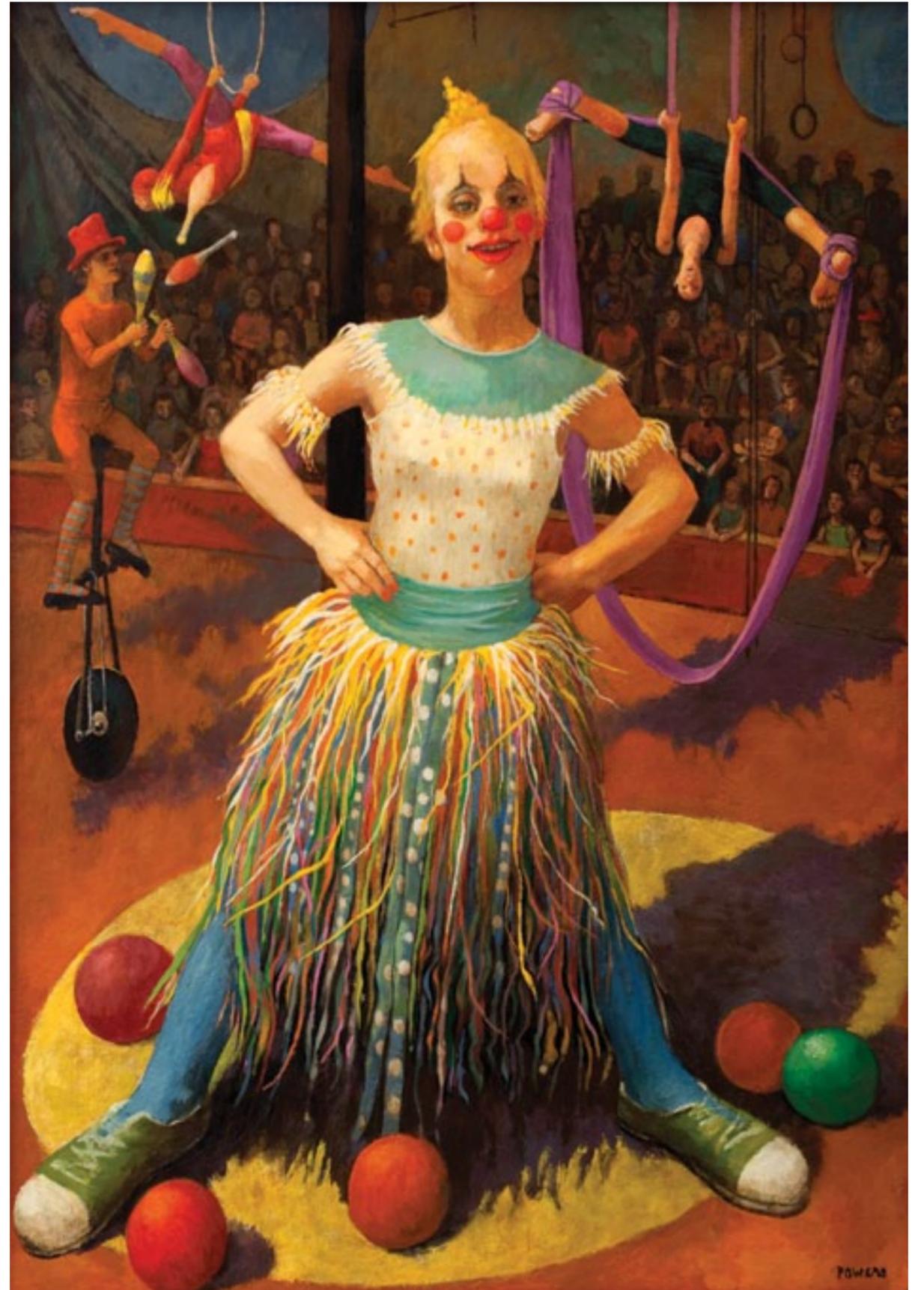
14

**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**

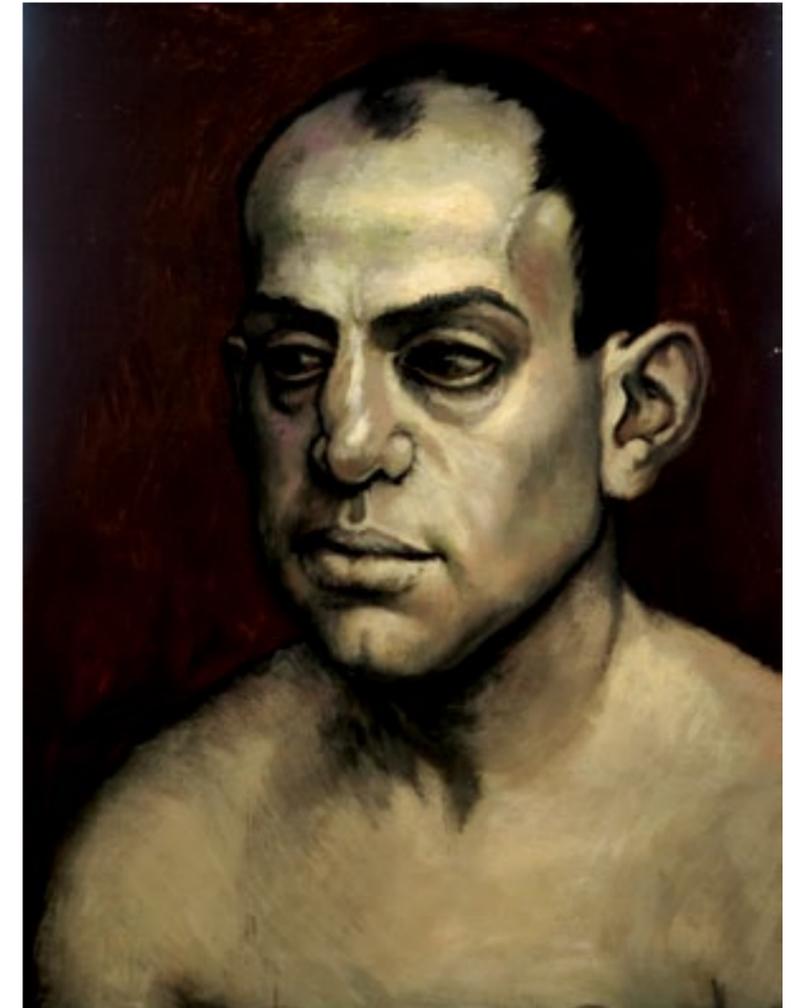
Encaustic on canvas  
30 X 30 INCHES

**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.



22

**22**  
**Europa**  
**Circa 1964**

Pen and ink wash  
11 7/8 X 18 1/8 INCHES  
Dated upper right; numbered lower right.



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.

**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

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

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.

**24**  
**Still Life with Smelts**  
**Circa 1960-70**

Oil on canvas  
8 X 24 INCHES



24

22 CHILDS GALLERY COLLECTIONS



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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