



# THE IRVINE MUSEUM

18881 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 100, Irvine, California 92612

Recorded Information (949) 476-2565

Bookstore and Offices (949) 476-0294

[www.irvinemuseum.org](http://www.irvinemuseum.org)

## Welcome to the Irvine Museum

Dedicated to the preservation and display of California art of the Impressionist Period (1890-1930), The Irvine Museum is embracing a principal role in the education and furtherance of this beautiful and important regional variant of American Impressionism that has come to be associated with California and its remarkable landscape. The Irvine Museum invites you to share this experience and to enjoy the splendor and power of art as it relates directly to our beloved California.

Much of what originally made California a “Golden Land” was directly linked to the environment, especially the land and water that nurtured and sustained a rare quality of life. Over a hundred years ago, the splendor of nature fascinated artists and compelled them to paint beautiful paintings. As we view these rare and remarkable paintings, we are returned, all too briefly, to a time long ago when the land and its bounty were open and almost limitless. Today, with the renaissance of the glorification of nature in art, that spirit is motivating enlightened people in the same way it energized artists of the past. The common bond is the deep reverence for nature and the common goal is to preserve our environment, and no statement is more eloquent than the silent testament of these magnificent paintings. Each generation, in its turn, is the steward of the land, water and air. Our time is now. I sincerely hope that the message this museum imparts will inspire us all to action in this most pressing obligation.

Joan Irvine Smith  
President

# The Irvine Museum in Perspective

by Jean Stern  
Executive Director

The Irvine Museum opened its doors on January 15, 1993. Nine months earlier, on April 15, 1992, I started my first day as Executive Director and sole employee of The Irvine Museum, not long after Joan Irvine Smith and her mother, Athalie R. Clarke, had signed the documents to create the museum.

The Irvine Museum's inaugural exhibition was *Selections from The Irvine Museum*, which curiously opened not in Irvine but in Scottsdale in 1992, a few weeks prior to our own museum's grand opening. The exhibition tour was originally scheduled to open at The Irvine Museum, continue to the Fleischer Museum in Scottsdale, Arizona, and then move on to the Oakland Museum of California. However, as we approached the opening date, it became evident that we could not meet the schedule because our museum, which was under construction in a temporary location, would not be ready in time. We revised the show so that it would be shown first at the Fleischer Museum, then continue to Oakland, and end its tour in Irvine. We published our first Irvine Museum book, *Selections from The Irvine Museum*, as a companion volume to the exhibition. The book proved extremely popular, and within two years, we ordered a second printing.

At that time, just after the publication of our first book, Mrs. Smith and the board of directors of the museum instituted a policy that any public, non-profit institution that requested the museum's books for its library would receive a complete set in hardbound editions, free of charge. The only requirement was to have the request presented on the institution's letterhead. This policy, administered by James Swinden, has been in effect since the museum opened its doors. One single gift of Irvine Museum books to the California State Library System in 2004 comprised 1,000 sets. To date, it is estimated that more than 2,000 sets of books have been given to libraries in public schools, private schools and colleges, as well as local, county and state public libraries.

On the evening of January 14, 1993, The Irvine Museum celebrated its grand opening with a gala reception; the following morning, on January 15, we opened our doors to the public for the very first time. Our initial location was in Suite 1250, on the twelfth floor of Tower 17, a beautiful building located at 18881 Von Karman Avenue in Irvine. Most people who visited us expressed their astonishment that a museum was located in an office building, but their bewilderment quickly changed to enchantment after a tour of the exhibition.

Even before we had opened the museum, we mounted an exhibition to accompany The Oaks Classic and The Oaks Fall Classic, two Grand Prix horse jumping events held at The Oaks, Mrs.

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Smith's equestrian training facility in San Juan Capistrano. These art shows were held for two days, twice a year, until 1998, when the art exhibitions were discontinued. The exhibitions were displayed in a large tent that was air conditioned for the benefit of the paintings. Accompanying the art shows were displays by a selection of art dealers that specialized in California paintings.

When Athalie Richardson Irvine Clarke, Joan Irvine Smith's mother and the co-founder of The Irvine Museum, died at ninety years of age on May 22, 1993, the museum started planning *Reflections of California: The Athalie Richardson Irvine Clarke Memorial Exhibition*, our second traveling exhibition. Because Mrs. Clarke had been a longtime friend of President and Mrs. Richard Nixon, and also had been appointed by President Nixon to the Committee for the Preservation of the White House, her memorial exhibition opened at the Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace in Yorba Linda, California. As Mrs. Clarke had also been re-appointed to that committee by President Ford and President Carter, the show traveled on to the Jimmy Carter Library in Atlanta and to the Palm Springs Desert Museum before coming home to Irvine.

In recognition of his friendship with Mrs. Clarke, President Nixon had readily agreed to officiate at the opening of her memorial show in Yorba Linda, but he fell ill and died just a few days prior to opening night. As part of the period of national mourning, President Nixon's body lay in state at the Nixon Library at the same time that *Reflections of California* was displayed there. The many thousands of people who came to pay their respects to the late president also viewed our exhibition. Mrs. Clarke's close friendship with President Nixon and this remarkable timing of events afforded us the unlikely satisfaction that we, as a very young museum, had a show that claimed more than 100,000 visitors.

*Reflections of California* was accompanied by a fully illustrated book featuring a superb essay by Joan Irvine Smith that is distinguished both as an eloquent tribute to her mother and as a synopsis of the history of Orange County.

Also in 1994, the museum organized a sweeping exhibition and book on the historic Franciscan missions of California. *Romance of the Bells: The California Missions in Art* was a compilation of paintings, watercolors and etchings of the twenty-one California missions, painted in the period between 1880 and 1940. The book, which has an introduction by Joan Irvine Smith and essays by Gerald J. Miller, Pamela Hallan-Gibson, Norman Neuerburg and myself, has received popular acclaim as a readable survey of California's historic missions and their representations in art.

*Romance of the Bells: The California Missions in Art* opened at the Mission San Juan Capistrano with a dramatic and magnificent evening gala in the historic mission courtyard. Many of the paintings, which were painted there more than a century ago, were displayed in the two-hundred-year-old arcade, using a hanging method that did not impact the ancient adobe walls, and they were illuminated by a lighting system installed specifically for the event. It was a unique and mystical



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experience to stroll the softly lit grounds of the time-honored mission and see the historic paintings in the same setting.

*Romance of the Bells* was displayed in several museums and academic institutions throughout California, including the Mission San Luis Rey, University of San Diego Art Gallery, the Santa Barbara Historical Society Museum, the Bakersfield Museum of Art, the Monterey Museum of Art, the Santa Cruz Museum and the Redding Museum.

In 1995, three small museums in California approached The Irvine Museum with the idea of organizing a show and publishing a catalogue that featured landscapes from each museum's immediate region. This wonderful idea became *Palette of Light*, which was organized and displayed at the Santa Cruz Museum, the Redding Museum, the Bakersfield Museum of Art and The Irvine Museum.

In 1995, after three years of preparation, The Irvine Museum and the Oakland Museum of California jointly produced *Guy Rose: American Impressionist*, a retrospective exhibition accompanied by a definitive book on the artist. Dr. Will South, a scholar on American art, was commissioned to write a comprehensive biography of Guy Rose, and noted American art history professor William H. Gerdtz wrote an introduction. Mrs. Smith wrote an introduction, and I wrote an essay that examined Rose's unique and important role in the California art community.

As part of the Guy Rose project, The Irvine Museum and the Oakland Museum of California sponsored a video documentary on the life of the artist. The captivating twenty-six-minute film, produced by Robert Boudreaux, aired on many local PBS television stations.

*Guy Rose: American Impressionist* opened to a tremendous attendance at the Oakland Museum and continued with great popularity at The Irvine Museum, the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey and the Greenville Museum in South Carolina. For many years, *Guy Rose* claimed the highest attendance of any of our exhibitions.

In 1996, The Irvine Museum became one of the few museums in the United States to be invited to participate in the Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad Arts Festival. Working with the University of Georgia Art Museum in Athens, Georgia, one of the venues for the Games, we produced *California Impressionists*, the most important California Impressionist painting show up to that time. Drawn from our collection as well as from several notable private collections, this superb exhibition was documented in an accompanying book with introductions by Joan Irvine Smith and James Swinden and essays by Dr. Susan Landauer, Donald D. Keyes, curator of the Georgia Museum of Art, and myself.

*California Impressionists* opened at the University of Georgia Art Museum in Athens in conjunction with the opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games in Atlanta. The show continued to the Cummer Museum in Jacksonville, Florida; the Gibbes Museum in Charleston, South Carolina; the University of Utah Museum in Provo, Utah; the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento and The Irvine Museum.

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Also in 1996, a PBS video project called *Impressions of California*, with lead funding by the Joan Irvine Smith & Athalie R. Clarke Foundation, came to fruition. A few months before, Paul Bockhorst, an award-winning filmmaker and producer at KOCE-TV in Huntington Beach, had completed a PBS documentary entitled *Visions of California*, which examined the art and artists of California during the Great Depression. Soon after the station aired *Visions of California*, he approached the museum for assistance in producing the second installment of a planned three-part series, to be called *Impressions of California*. This was to be a “prequel” to *Visions* in that it would examine an earlier period of art in California, between the 1870s and the 1920s.

To accompany *Impressions of California*, the Irvine Museum and KOCE jointly produced an exhibition of paintings and an illustrated book to complement the video. The program is still shown on various PBS stations.

In 1998, a long-term project between the Art Gallery at California State University, Dominguez Hills and The Irvine Museum came to fruition with the opening of *Painted Light: California Impressionist Paintings from the Gardena High School–Los Angeles Unified School District Collection*. This superb exhibition, organized by Kathy Zimmerer and curated by myself, featured the well-respected Gardena High School art collection, amassed by the student body over a period of thirty-five years.

Unique in the history of Southern California public schools, Gardena High initiated a policy of having the graduating class purchase a work of art for the school collection. This tradition continued into the 1950s, with two, or sometimes three, paintings added each year.

As an art historian in the field of California painting, I had heard of this collection and had seen it on several occasions from the late 1970s. The collection was superb, but its handling, storage and conservation were alarming. Gardena High School did all it could to protect the paintings, but after years of mishandling, damage and destructive “restoration” by well-meaning art teachers, several of the pieces had become irretrievably damaged and others were very near that point.

At the suggestion of Kathy Zimmerer, I attended a meeting at Gardena High School to see if something could be done to preserve the collection. The meeting at Gardena High School led to an agreement on initiating this difficult and costly project—that is, to prepare the paintings for display, to document and publish a book on the collection, and to tour the collection in a traveling exhibition. Not long afterward, Kathy announced that she had secured funding from the W. M. Keck Foundation, which allowed us to start the project.

*Painted Light* was a tremendous success. The exhibition was shown at California State University, Dominguez Hills, The Irvine Museum and the Autry Museum of Western Heritage. The story of how this remarkable collection was saved became an episode in Huell Howser’s *California’s Gold* program, which airs on PBS stations.

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Our first traveling exhibition to reach the Northeastern United States, *All Things Bright & Beautiful*, was organized in 1998, with noted American art authority William H. Gerdts serving as Guest Curator. The show consisted of a selection of fifty-eight paintings drawn from our collections as well as from those of several private lenders, representing the best exhibition of California Impressionists to date.

*All Things Bright & Beautiful* was shown at the National Academy Museum in New York, the Terra Museum of American Art in Chicago, the Dixon Gallery and Gardens in Memphis, the Oakland Museum of California as well as The Irvine Museum. This was the first time that an exhibition of California Impressionist paintings was displayed in New York or Chicago.

As is usual with The Irvine Museum, we published a full-color book to accompany the show, with an congratulatory letter by Governor Pete Wilson, introductions by Joan Irvine Smith, James Swinden, and scholarly essays by Professor Gerdts, myself, Harvey Jones of the Oakland Museum of California, and David Dearing, curator of the National Academy Museum. In addition, I presented a slide-illustrated lecture at the Terra Museum in Chicago, and Professor Gerdts and I each presented a lecture on Impressionist paintings at the National Academy.

The first significant gift to The Irvine Museum was presented by the Geoffrey Beaumont family in December 1998. The gift consisted of a large collection of watercolors, drawings and other artwork by the celebrated painter of U.S. Navy scenes Arthur E. Beaumont (1890–1978). The generous gift of the Geoffrey Beaumont family includes several important paintings from the 1941 National Geographic Society's "Ships That Guard Our Ocean Ramparts" series.

In 1998, Mrs. Smith, The Irvine Museum's President and founder, proposed an ambitious exhibition that would bring together a large number of environmental, art, cultural, governmental and private organizations that share an enlightened view toward conservation. This momentous show titled *A Silent Testament: Nature and Humankind in the Balance*, was held at the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art from mid-March through mid-April 1998. It offered insight into the state of biodiversity on a planet-wide scale and suggested approaches for present and future methods of finding workable solutions. Due to the short lead time for *A Silent Testament*, we could only publish a small illustrated pamphlet, which nevertheless gained wide distribution, especially in schools, and required a second printing.

The list of supporting entities for *A Silent Testament* is indeed impressive. The list included the Friends of the Nature Reserve of Orange County, the Nature Conservancy, the Irvine Company, County of Orange, Bowers Museum of Cultural Art, American Oceans Campaign, University of California at Irvine, National Water Research Institute, National Audubon Society, Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Orange County Water District, Rancho Mission Viejo Company, Rancho Mission Viejo Land Conservancy (now known as the Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy) and Scripps Institute of Oceanography, among many others



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The success of *A Silent Testament* led to a joint project between the Nature Conservancy of California and The Irvine Museum in 2000, entitled *Native Grandeur: Preserving California's Vanishing Landscapes*. This exhibition, co-produced with Mark Sanderson of the Nature Conservancy, featured a stunning group of paintings illustrating the seven ecological regions of California: the South Coast, the Desert, the Central Coast, the North Coast, the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Great Central Valley and the Shasta-Cascades.

These beautiful paintings of California were selected from The Irvine Museum, the Oakland Museum of California, the Crocker Art Museum, the Hearst Art Gallery, the Kern County Museum and several private collections.

*Native Grandeur* was shown at the Oakland Museum of California, the Napa Valley Museum, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History and the San Diego Natural History Museum.

Another small but very influential pamphlet that grew into an important project was published in 1999, and was entitled *California's True Gold: Her priceless and irreplaceable cultural and historical monuments and her beautiful and fragile environment so very close to the "earthly paradise."* *California's True Gold* was a brief overview of California history, with special emphasis on Orange County and the Mission San Juan Capistrano. It was produced to accompany the mission's first Pageant of Capistrano.

The historical discussion in *California's True Gold* spawned a great demand for additional information from schools and numerous interested individuals. We soon learned that in California public schools, California history is taught in the fourth grade only, and not again until college, and then only as an elective. Sensing a need for an accurate, readable and well-illustrated account of the history of California, we opted to produce an exhibition and book to examine this subject.

Also in 1999, The Irvine Museum accepted a second major gift in the form of the estate of Frank H. Myers, given to us by the Patricia Clark Myers Trust. Myers was a well-respected leader of the Carmel-Monterey art community, serving as president of the Carmel Art Association in 1953.

Myers works are in the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., the Museum of New Mexico, the University of Cincinnati, and of course, The Irvine Museum.

In 2001, we opened *California, This Golden Land of Promise*, an exhibition featuring paintings that documented the historical development of our state and of Orange County. Every day, from the time we opened the exhibition until it closed, we received constantly growing crowds of visitors. To accommodate the large number of visitors, we extended the show from our usual four months to five months. *California, This Golden Land of Promise* was also shown at the Napa Valley Museum, the Bakersfield Museum of Art and the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento.

The accompanying book, *California, This Golden Land of Promise*, which Joan Irvine Smith and I wrote, includes a detailed timeline by James Swinden and an introduction by Dr. James I. Doti,

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president of Chapman University. Directed at a general audience, the book is illustrated with historical paintings of California as well as archival photographs, maps, and quotes from original letters, diaries and source books.

To be certain that our text was indeed accurate, Jim Doti selected a committee of history scholars to review the narrative. This committee was made up of Professors Leland L. Estes, Lynne M. Pierson Doti, Robert A. Slayton and James C. Miller, all of Chapman University, as well as Phil Brigandi, an Orange County historian and scholar.

Published jointly by Chapman University Press and The Irvine Museum, *California, This Golden Land of Promise* contains 368 pages with 405 color plates, 88 black-and-white images, a timeline, bibliography and index. It is a historical narrative of California from prehistoric times through the Spanish exploration, colonization, the Mission Period, the Rancho Period, the American Conquest and the Gold Rush. It ends with a chapter on James Irvine I, founder of the Irvine Ranch.

Also in 2001, our long association with author and researcher Nancy Hall resulted in the publication of *The Life and Art of Paul de Longpré*, a beautiful and thoroughly researched book on the French-American flower painter. In addition to the main text by Nancy Hall, the book has introductions by Joan Irvine Smith and James Swinden, and an essay I wrote to place the artist within the budding southern California art community of the first decade of the twentieth century.

In March 2002, The Irvine Museum moved from its twelfth-floor suite to the ground-floor suite of Tower 17. Our original twelfth-floor suite was restricted in space, so we had to make our offices part of the public exhibition space. Our new site, suite 100, availed us of not only more display space, but also the opportunity to design our floor space to best fit our needs for proper viewing areas as well as private offices.

After seven years of planning and organizing exhibitions that traveled throughout California and to other parts of the country, we decided that we were ready to send a show to Europe. In 1999, Jim Swinden took the lead in producing *Masters of Light*, an exhibition of the best examples of California Impressionism, gathered from our collections and from those of fourteen private lenders. As we knew that we were going to be judged by a discerning and cultivated audience, we resolved that we would send only the very finest art.

From the outset, this exhibition required extraordinary effort, as there were countless adjustments that came with packing, crating, documenting and shipping an exhibition across international borders. After three years of planning and attention to hundreds of details, we were ready to send the exhibition to Paris, Krakow and Madrid and then home to Irvine.

As we do for all of our traveling exhibitions, Jim Swinden and I went to Paris to the Mona Bismark Foundation for the opening, as well as for interviews and press conferences. The Mona Bismark is a well-established venue that hosts a variety of American exhibitions.



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On his arrival at the museum, Jim was greeted by Monica Dunham, curator of the Mona Bismarck, who told him that the show was going to be a big hit. Jim asked Monica how she could be so certain, given that most of the paintings were still leaning against the wall, waiting to be hung. She related that the French professional art installers who were busy hanging the paintings had recently installed the *Matisse to Picasso* show at the nearby Grand Palais, and they had stated that they liked our paintings much more than the ones they had recently installed.

A few days later, I talked to a group of ladies who were viewing the exhibition. They said they were docents at the Musée d'Orsay, and that at their next meeting, they would suggest a docent group visit to the Mona Bismarck. They told me they had never seen such vivid and brilliant paintings at the Musée d'Orsay.

On press day, Jim and I were pleasantly startled to see more than one hundred journals, magazines and periodicals represented at the press conference. To accommodate the large number of journalists, Jim held a series of one-on-one interviews, and I led three separate press tours of the exhibition. Being a native French speaker, I made an instant hit when, after being introduced as the director of an American museum, I addressed the press conference and each press tour of the paintings in fluent French.

On September 25, 2002, *Masters of Light* opened to a large audience at the Mona Bismarck Foundation, hosted by U.S. Ambassador Howard H. Leach and his wife. From the start of the exhibition run, the Mona Bismarck attracted large numbers of sophisticated French visitors who were willing to stand in line on the Avenue de New York to await the opportunity to see our plein air paintings. In fact, the French public was very gracious and had no preconceived bias against American Impressionist paintings.

In February 2003, *Masters of Light* opened at the International Cultural Centre in Krakow, Poland, in the middle of the Polish winter. Through the kindness of Professor Purchla and his staff, Jim and I were greeted like visiting diplomats. We were amazed at the long lines of patient visitors that snaked out the door and into the snow on a daily basis. To meet the unexpected and extraordinary demand, the Centre had to open one extra day per week and two extra hours per day. The final tally of visitors came to 33,000, far exceeding the Centre's previous record of about 8,000 for a three-month exhibition.

As part of the arrangements between The Irvine Museum and the International Cultural Centre, it was mutually agreed to hold an environmental and cultural symposium in Krakow as part of the show. In late April, in the Polish springtime when it was not nearly so cold, Jim and I attended the conference with our invited guest and colleague, David Beckman of the Natural Resources Defense Council, who presented a paper there.

The third European venue was the Centro Cultural Conde Duque, a beautiful municipal museum set in an old palace in Madrid. The venue was arranged by our friends and fellow Orange

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County residents U.S. Ambassador George Argyros and his wife, Julia. On June 18, 2003, Jim and I represented The Irvine Museum at the opening reception, which was hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Argyros. *Masters of Light* continued through the summer and drew large crowds of Spanish and foreign visitors.

This, the most ambitious and successful exhibition up to that date, is of course documented in a book. *Masters of Light* features a congratulatory letter by Governor Gray Davis, scholarly essays by Dr. William H. Gerdtz and myself, and introductions by Joan Irvine Smith and James Swinden. All fifty-eight paintings that comprised the show are illustrated in full-page color, as are the more than forty other images that illustrate the essays.

In 2003, we published a book entitled *Plant Portraits: The Life and Art of Albert R. Valentien*, a joint project with the San Diego Natural History Museum. A special exhibition of eighty of Valentien's watercolor studies of California flora was displayed at the San Diego Natural History Museum and traveled to Napa Valley Museum, Oakland Museum and then will open at The Irvine Museum in January, 2006. Then it will continue to the Wildling Museum, in Los Olivos, CA, the Newton Center, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Austin, TX, The Field Museum, Chicago IL and Turtle Bay Museum, Redding, CA.

Albert R. Valentien (1862–1925) is widely known as the first chief decorator at Rookwood Pottery in Cincinnati. After a twenty-year career, he and his wife, Anna, came to San Diego in 1903, and in 1907, accepted a commission from philanthropist Ellen Browning Scripps to paint a series of California flower paintings. The Scripps project occupied ten years of their lives, with Anna collecting examples and Albert dutifully painting them. In the end, Albert Valentien painted nearly 1,100 works, which were donated by the Scripps estate to the San Diego Natural History Museum in 1933. And there they remained, locked in a vault for almost seventy years, nearly totally out of view.

Having lived in San Diego for many years, and having worked at the San Diego Art Museum, I knew of this treasure and had seen, from time to time, a few of these works by Albert Valentien on limited display. In 2001, Mrs. Smith, Jim Swinden and I were given a special opportunity to view all of these remarkable paintings. The visual and emotional impact was resounding, and Mrs. Smith quickly offered to have The Irvine Museum publish a book and assist in the task of producing a traveling exhibition.

The Irvine Museum is close to completing a five-year project on the art and life of Joseph Kleitsch (1882–1931), one of the most important Impressionist painters of southern California. As part of the project, we will be publishing a fastidiously researched text by Dr. Patricia Trenton, a well-known art historian in the field of American painting. A major retrospective exhibition of Kleitsch's paintings, with Dr. Trenton as Guest Curator, will be organized and sent on tour.

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Another important exhibition and book project that is also on our schedule is an examination of the life and art of Arthur E. Beaumont. The elegant and informative text was written by Geoffrey C. Beaumont, son of the artist.

Just this year, the museum has commissioned Phil Kavinick, an eminent author and researcher on American art, to write the text for the forthcoming book and exhibition on John Frost (1890–1937). Frost, often called the “lost Impressionist” of California, was the son of Arthur B. Frost, an American painter and illustrator. John Frost was a promising painter who was struck down by tuberculosis at age 46. While small in number, Frost’s extant paintings are of superb style and quality. His work is often compared to that of Guy Rose, who was both his friend and his mentor.

In 1995, when we published *Guy Rose, American Impressionist*, we had planned to follow up this volume with a companion book to be called the *Guy Rose Catalogue Raisonné*. This monumental book, containing a list and accompanying photographs of every known work by Guy Rose, is being compiled and edited by Roy C. Rose of the Rose Family Collection and Archives. The *Guy Rose Catalogue Raisonné* will be published by The Irvine Museum sometime in the next five to ten years.

Moreover, we are contemplating initiating two more monographs dealing with the life and art of Sam Hyde Harris (1889–1977) and Frank H. Myers (1899-1956). We have had many suggestions as to which California Impressionists should be documented, and we will continue our research and publication programs with the intent of fully documenting the prominent artists of this style.

In addition to all of the exhibitions and books discussed earlier, we maintain a rigorous exhibition and educational program at the museum. Due to the space limitations of our small museum, we only have one show at a time, which we change every four months; for now, there is no “permanent collection” gallery. Thus, three times a year, all of the paintings are taken down and returned to their respective owners, and a new show is brought in, installed, labeled and properly lit.

At the same time, the educational program is adapted and modified three times a year to meet the demands of each new exhibition. A new curriculum is written, and our docents receive training in preparation for tours and field trips. Finally, for each exhibition, press releases and announcement cards are mailed, and plans and arrangements are readied for the press reception and the invitation-only opening reception.

My twelve years of association with The Irvine Museum have been remarkable and unique in every way, and thoroughly exciting at all times. I take great satisfaction and pride in knowing that I am a part of this noble endeavor. Mrs. Smith, the board of directors and the staff of the museum have established a lasting legacy by documenting the uniquely beautiful and uplifting art of the California Impressionist period. Singularly, and contrary to other contemporary art styles, California Impressionism is a style that enables us to redeem ourselves by reaffirming nature, the ultimate source of our being and the universal bond of humanity. In doing so, we can only enrich our art and dignify ourselves.



## Irvine Museum Permanent Exhibit



EDGAR PAYNE (1883-1947)

*Untitled, Sierra Landscape*

Edgar Payne was essentially a self-taught artist. He left home at the age of fourteen to pursue an artistic career. He traveled for a number of years taking various jobs as a house painter, sign painter, scenic painter and portrait and mural artist. He settled in Chicago in 1907. At this time he began landscape painting in the form of murals and small easel works. Payne visited California in 1901 and was captivated by the beauty of Laguna Beach. Later that year, he visited San Francisco, where he met his future wife, the artist Elsie Palmer. They were married in 1912, living in Chicago until 1917, during which time they became well established in the art circles. In 1917, Edgar accepted a commission to paint murals for the Congress Hotel in Chicago. The job consisted of 11,000 square feet of canvas. Edgar rented an old factory in Glendale to do the job. When the job was completed, they moved to Laguna Beach. Payne became active in the art colony there and was a founding member and first president of the Laguna Beach Art Association.

Payne painted throughout California and spent a great deal of time in the High Sierras, living for weeks at his elaborate campsites. His painting, *Untitled, Sierra Landscape*, is one of his many known scenes of that region. An alpine lake high in these mountains, Payne Lake, is named in his honor.

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WILLIAM WENDT (1865-1946)  
*Arcadian Hills*

William Wendt was born in Germany and came to the United States in 1880, settling in Chicago where he worked in a commercial art firm. Essentially self-taught, he preferred painting landscapes and quickly became an active exhibitor in various Chicago art shows. Between 1896 and 1904, he made several trips to California, seeking new scenes to paint. In 1906, Wendt and his wife, the sculptor Julia Bracken Wendt, settled in Los Angeles. A well-respected and successful painter, he became a leading member in the young Los Angeles art community and was a founding member of the California Art Club in 1909. He moved his home and studio to the art colony at Laguna Beach in 1912, the same year that he was elected to the National Academy of Design. Wendt was Laguna's most important resident artist-teacher.

Wendt painted exactly what he saw in nature with warm colors and outstanding effects of light and shadow. The tranquility, strength and sense of well being of his work, such as *Arcadian Hills*, appealed to a wide audience. A prolific painter, he was known as the dean of Southern California's landscape painters.

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DONNA SCHUSTER (1883-1953)

*On the Beach, 1917*

Donna Schuster attended the Art Institute of Chicago, where she graduated with honors. She then studied at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School with Edmund C. Tarbell and Frank W. Benson. She went on a painting tour of Belgium in 1912 with William Merritt Chase and won the William Merritt Chase Prize. Schuster moved to Los Angeles in 1913 and the following summer studied once again with Chase at the Carmel Art School. In 1923 she built a studio-home in the hills of Griffith Park above Hollywood, and joined the faculty of Otis Art Institute. She spent her summers at a second studio-home in Laguna Beach. She became involved in the new art colony developing there and became one of the founders of the Laguna Beach Art Association. In 1928 she began a friendship and course of study with Stanton MacDonald-Wright who, along with Morgan Russell, devised Synchronism, a disciplined approach to painting that created rhythmic movement and emotion content solely through the use of color.

One of Schuster's favorite subject matter was figures of young women, generally in outdoor scenes, such as *On the Beach*. The light and airy atmosphere of this painting along with the Japanese parasol are characteristic of French Impressionism, however, Schuster's use of bold color suggests a more modernist approach to painting.



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GUY ROSE (1867-1925)

*Laguna Eucalyptus*

Guy Rose was born in San Gabriel, California in 1867. As a child, he was a prodigious artist. He attended the California School of Design, studying under Virgil Williams and Emil Carlsen. In 1888 he went to Paris and enrolled in the Academie Julian. He was an accomplished student who soon had his paintings accepted for the Paris Salon. In 1894 Rose underwent a serious episode of lead poisoning which forced him to avoid oil painting for about eight years. He returned to the United States and concentrated on a career as an illustrator. He gradually regained his health and returned to oil painting around 1897. In 1899 he returned to Paris, where he continued to do illustration work for Harper's Bazaar and other American magazines. Rose was greatly influenced by Claude Monet, and in 1904 he and his wife Ethel, settled in Giverny, becoming members of the small American art colony there. They returned permanently to the United States in 1912, settling for a time in New York. He arrived in Pasadena at the end of 1914 and became active in local art circles, serving for several years on the board of trustees of the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science, and Art. He became the director of the Stickney Memorial School of Fine Arts in Pasadena.

In keeping with Impressionist style, Rose painted *Laguna Eucalyptus* with a dramatic sense of light and atmosphere in a loose choppy brush stroke. Rose is generally regarded as California's foremost Impressionist, and was held in the highest esteem by his peers and patrons.

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ALFRED R. MITCHELL (1888-1972)  
*In Morning Light*

Mitchell came to California in 1908, settling in San Diego where, in 1913, he began to study at the San Diego Academy of Art under Maurice Braun. His talents were acknowledged just two years later when he received a silver medal at the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. Encouraged by Braun, Mitchell decided to return to his native Pennsylvania in 1916. In 1920 he was awarded the Cresson European Traveling Scholarship, which allowed him to spend the summer of 1921 in England, France, Italy and Spain. Upon his completion of his studies, Mitchell returned to San Diego where he became an active member of the art community.

Mitchell's early works are impressionistic; however his later works are more strongly realistic and often have an emotional presence. This can be seen in his painting, *In Morning Light*. The painting shows the cliffs of La Jolla, as the warming light of the morning sun slowly lifts the mist. The dark ledge in the foreground yields to the coming day and unfolds into the richly glowing, cathedral-like cliffs of the background.

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GRANDVILLE REDMOND (1871-1935)

*California Landscape with Flowers*

Granville Redmond contracted scarlet fever at the age of two and a half, an illness that left him permanently deaf. He never learned to speak and communicated by writing notes or using sign language. In 1874, his family came to California, and in 1879 Redmond enrolled in what was then called the Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind at Berkeley, now called the California School for the Deaf, in Fremont. An excellent student, Redmond received a stipend from the school and in 1893 went to Paris, where he enrolled in the Academie Julian. After five years in France, he returned to California and opened a studio in Los Angeles. For the next several years he painted throughout the Los Angeles area. In 1908, he relocated to Northern California and soon earned the reputation of one of San Francisco's leading painters.

Redmonds's patrons loved his cheerful paintings of rolling hills covered with golden poppies and other wild flowers, such as *California Landscape with Flowers*. Yet Redmond, who suffered from long periods of recurring depression, preferred to paint in a moody, introspective style, using the dark tonalities of the Northern California aesthetic of his early art training.