

Painting Maine: Maurice Freedman



Ogunquit Museum of American Art ■ September–October 2009



Self Portrait, 1930 oil on canvas 22 x 16 inches Private Collection

Front Cover: **Stonington Pier** 1954 oil on canvas 30 x 40 inches
Courtesy of Greenhut Galleries

“Every so often you come across an artist whose work is so appealing and so accomplished that you wonder how it could have slipped under your radar. One example is Maurice Freedman...”

New York Times, September 2005
by Ken Johnson
D. Wigmore Gallery A Retrospective

Painting Maine: Maurice Freedman

September 5–October 31, 2009



Ogunquit Museum of American Art

543 Shore Road Ogunquit, Maine 03907

www.ogunquitmuseum.org

Painting Maine: Maurice Freedman

Ron Crusan *Executive Director/Curator, Ogunquit Museum of American Art*

When I was first introduced to the works of Maurice Freedman earlier this year, I looked, as I always do, for the signifying characteristics that place an artist and his work in an art historical context. I studied his mature style. Who influenced him and who did he influence? Who were his contemporaries with whom he discussed art? Where did he go and who did he study with? And more formally, what was his choice of palette, brushstroke, form and function? Could I categorize him as a Cubist, Expressionist, Modernist, Fauve or did he possess a unique quality that transcended a school of style?

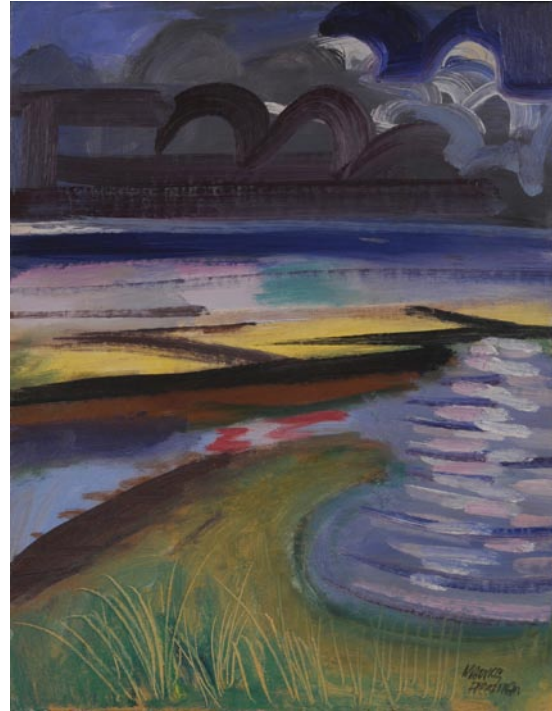
After viewing several dozen works I realized that, academics and dissection of style aside, this was a man who simply loved to paint. Joy is what comes through his canvases time and again. The physical act of painting, mixing of pigments, scooping up a brush-full of thick, lush color and applying it in sometimes soft,

sometimes aggressive strokes was all a joy to Freedman. His message to us the viewers is clear: enjoy the life that is all around you. His message is illustrated through his brilliant use of color, line and shape. His compositions are sometimes complex but easily read and pleasing.

Of course, Maurice Freedman was not a simple painter. He studied the work of Picasso and Matisse in Europe and worked with Andre Lhôte as well. He, like his American contemporary, Marsden Hartley, learned from the European masters and assimilated the lessons learned into his own style, an American style of abstraction similarly practiced by Hartley, Marin, Knaths and Avery, among others. Though his composition and formulation of objects is Cubist in origin and his color sense may have a Fauve influence, it is well-documented that the emotion and direct power of painting in the work of Max Beckmann was a prime influence on Freedman.

Though all artists are influenced to some degree by the artists who came before, Freedman was very much his own man. His body of work, created over 50 years of artistic output, displays a consistency of vision and technique that translates the emotional power of a scene directly onto the canvas. His work and his legacy make for a compelling exhibition; one that the Ogunquit Museum of American Art is proud to host. For me, one of the joys of my profession is learning about great, but overlooked artists, and helping to bring their work to the attention of the public. Maurice Freedman, though not as well-known as some other modernists, deserves the recognition a great American modernist master deserves.

A special thank you to the collectors who generously loaned their works for this exhibit. My appreciation goes to Peggy Greenhut Golden, Owner and Director of Greenhut Galleries, Portland, Maine, without whom this exhibition would not have been possible. Thanks also to her assistant Lori Tremblay who graciously handled many of the details. My thanks to Alan Freedman, the painter's son, who is a champion for his father's work.



Bay Reflections #3

1968 oil on panel 18 x 14 inches *Private Collection*

Finally, I want to salute our Corporate Partner Bob Davis of RE/MAX Realty One for sponsoring *PAINTING MAINE: Maurice Freedman*. The OMAA is most grateful for their generous support.



Blue Hill Cove 1964 oil on canvas 20 x 30 inches *Private Collection*



Nor'easter 1957 oil on panel 16 x 20 inches *Private Collection*



“Maurice Freedman has come through with the best work of his career. Quite different in palette and in approach, some of these canvases of the Adirondacks and the Maine coast remind one of the work by Marsden Hartley in their strength and their semi-abstract interpretation of Nature.”

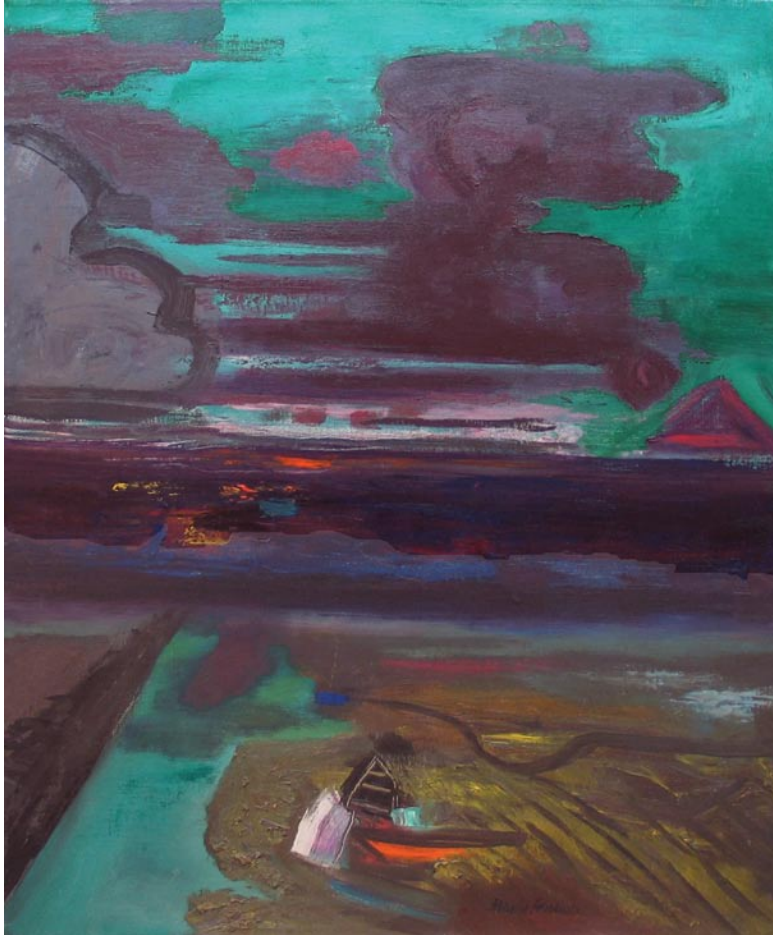
Reproduced and reviewed
the *New York Times*, February 16, 1947
by Howard Devree

Pemaquid Lobster 1945 oil on canvas 35 x 22 inches

Courtesy of Greenhut Galleries



Incoming Fog 1957 oil on canvas 20 x 30 inches *Private Collection*



Evening Cloud 1959 oil on canvas 24 x 20 inches Courtesy of Greenhut Galleries

“The freedom with which Freedman manipulated color and the poetic aura he was able to impart through it remained the most engaging aspects of his work.”

Art News, September 1985
by Maurice Poirier

“Seafood Window” with its sumptuous array of the sea’s bounty: shrimp, lobster, fish, mussels... a masterful still life.”

Maurice Freedman:
“A Master Returns to Maine ”
A Certain Synthesis
July 2004, by Carl Little



Seafood Window 1944 oil on canvas 26 x 37 inches *Private Collection*



Maine Islands 1960 oil on panel 18 x 24 inches *Private Collection*



Horse Tuna 1949 oil on canvas 22 x 40 inches *Private Collection*



Stonington Facade 1950 oil on panel 18 x 24 inches *Private Collection*



Rock Harbor Inlet 1946 oil on canvas 22 x 34 inches *Courtesy of Greenhut Galleries*



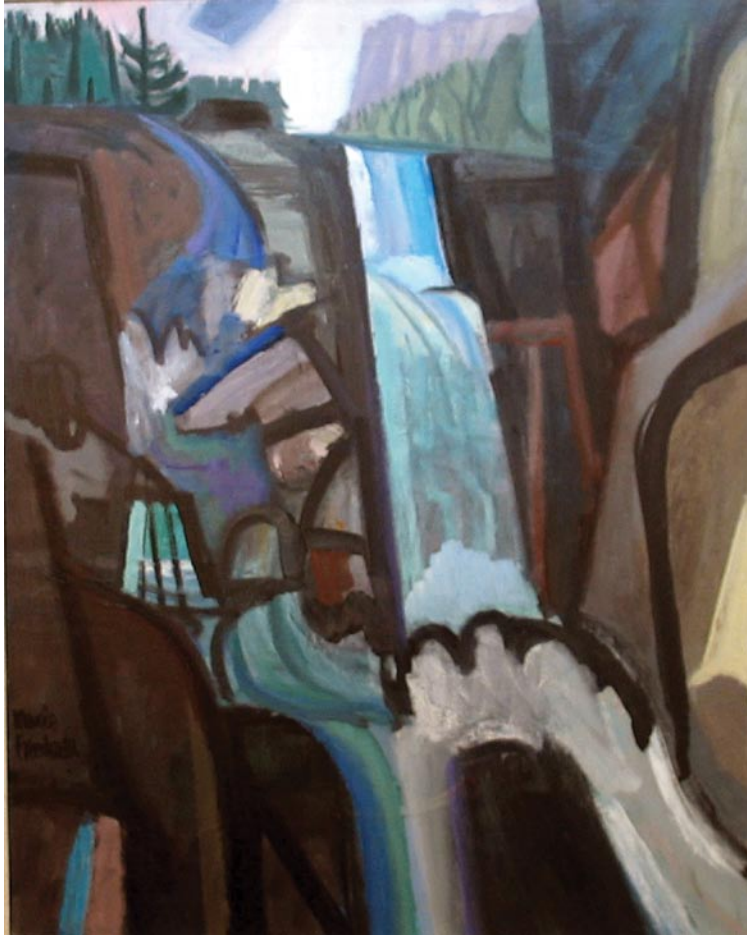
“Freedman’s truths were closely tied to an optimistic vision. Using nature and man’s place in the world, [he] was able to signify the positive qualities of human nature.”

Hudson River Museum
1989 Retrospective
by Liese Hilgeman

Bathers Interlude 1948 oil on canvas 28 x 24 inches Courtesy of Greenhut Galleries



Off Whitehead 1940 oil on canvas 20 x 30 inches *Private Collection*



*“It’s a defining strength
that his best works can
appear so effortless and
casual before discovering
how well considered and
engaging they are.”*

*Cape Cod Times, August 2004
by André Van Der Wende*

Mad River Falls 1960 oil on canvas 30 x 24 inches Courtesy of Greenhut Galleries

BORN

November 14, 1904 Boston, MA

DIED

January 27, 1985 Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

EDUCATION

School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1919–1921

Massachusetts Normal School of Art, 1922–1926
(now Massachusetts College of Art)

Art Students' League, 1927

Studies with André Lhôte, Ferdinand Léger, Amedee
Ozenfant, Paris 1928–1931

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Ogunquit Museum of American Art, Ogunquit, ME: 2009

Greenhut Galleries, Portland, ME: 2009, 2006, 2004

Acme Fine Art, Boston, MA: 2008

D. Wigmore Fine Arts, New York, NY: 2005

Cape Museum of Fine Arts, Dennis, MA: 2004
Centennial Retrospective

Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown, MA: 1991-2004 annually

Midtown Galleries, New York, NY: 1934, 1939, 1944, 1946,
1948, 1952, 1956, 1959, 1963, 1965, 1969, 1971, 1975,
1977, 1979, 1982 Retrospective, 1985, 1987

Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY: 1989 Retrospective

Hobe Sound Galleries North, Portland, ME: 1987

Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, MO:
1972 Retrospective

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, NY

Art in Embassies Program, Washington, D.C.

Art Institute of Chicago, IL

Brooklyn Museum, NY

Butler Institute of American Art, OH

Carnegie Institute, Museum of Art, PA

Columbus Museum of Art, OH

Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Denver Art Museum, CO

The Jewish Museum, NY

Maine Coast Artists Gallery, Rockport, ME

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY

Midtown-Payson Gallery, NY

Midtown Galleries, NY

Museum of Contemporary Art, Madrid, Spain

National Academy of Design, NY

Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts, PA

Shaw Gallery, ME

Toledo Museum of Art, OH

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, VA

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN

Westmoreland Museum of American Art, Greensburg, PA
— Painting in the USA

Westport Art Center, Westport, CT

Whitney Museum of American Art, NY



Photo: Maurice Freedman, ca 1934

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS / AWARDS

Adirondack Museum, NY
Allentown Art Museum, PA – Hassam Purchase Award
Anchorage Museum of History and Art, AL
Audubon Society, NY – 40th Anniversary
Smith Binney Award
Brandeis University – Commissioned Work
Brooklyn Museum, New York
Butler Institute of American Art, OH
Carnegie Institute, Museum of Art, PA
Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
Denver Art Museum, CO
Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas, Austin, TX
LaJolla Museum of Contemporary Art, CA
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA
Milwaukee Art Museum, WI
Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN
University of Missouri Museum of Art, MO
National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC
Weatherspoon Art Gallery
Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts, PA
St. Lawrence University, Richard F. Brush Art Gallery, Canton, NY
The St. Louis Art Museum, MO
Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL
Tel Aviv Museum
Washington University Gallery of Art, St. Louis, MO
Wichita Art Museum, KS



“There are Freedman paintings that deserve to go straight into any history of American Paintings in this century.”

New York Times February 1982, by John Russell Midtown Gallery Retrospective

Inlet Wave, Ogunquit 1963 oil on canvas 16 x 30 inches *Private Collection*



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