



CALIFORNIA ART CLUB NEWSLETTER

GUY ROSE, well-traveled and refined, yet preferring the life of a recluse, felt far more at ease fishing than he did meeting the social demands as a highly sought after artist and the son of a millionaire.

GUY ROSE

AMERICAN IMPRESSIONIST AT THE IRVINE MUSEUM

Reviewed by Elaine Adams



The Blue Kimono, ca. 1910.

o/c 34"×19"

COLLECTION OF TERRY and PAULA TROTTER

IT IS INTERESTING HOW LIFE CAN UNFOLD and unwittingly create one's own destiny. Thus was the case in the life of Guy Rose. Born as the seventh of eleven children on the third of March in 1867, Mr. Rose was raised on his family ranch, "Sunny Slope", in the San Gabriel Valley of Southern California, where from a young age he displayed more of a penchant for books than for horses.

Guy Rose's father, L.J. Rose was of Bavarian descent who immigrated with his family to America at age eleven. Besides being known for his resourcefulness and ambition, L.J. Rose became known for his keen awareness of aesthetic beauty. No doubt all these characteristics played an instrumental role in his son's life as an artist.

One of the activities on the Rose ranch was hunting. At the age of nine, and not yet old enough to hunt, young Guy joined his two brothers, Harry and Leon, on a hunting jaunt. Harry's rifle accidentally went off striking Guy in the face. It was during Guy's recuperation from his wound when he began to show his artistic tendencies. How ironic that this terrible incident, which resulted in a sizeable scar on Guy's chin, was also the catalyst in forming the future of an accomplished artist.

At the time Guy Rose was growing up in the San Gabriel Valley, Los Angeles was a new settlement with a mere population of approximately 10,000. Most were agriculturists, and art was not a common commodity, nor was it in demand. When Guy Rose was old enough, he left for the cultured city of San



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Laguna Eucalyptus o/c 40"×30"
COLLECTION OF THE IRVINE MUSEUM

Francisco where he enrolled at the San Francisco Art Association's California School of Design.

Guy Rose was an observant student whose personal style of painting was influenced by several of his early instructors. His first instructor was Virgil Williams (1830-1886) who instilled in him an appreciation for the history of art and the capability of applying that knowledge to current experiences. Another great influence on him was the instructor Soren Emil Carlsen (1853-1932) who used the advanced technique of softening edges and fading them into the background. Later, during Mr. Rose's student years in

Paris, he was influenced by the use of brilliant color and sophisticated lighting techniques as practiced by his instructor, Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant (1845-1902). Also during his many years in France, Mr. Rose was greatly influenced by the naturalist paintings of Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1894).

Guy Rose was among the first Californians to study at the Académie Julian in Paris. While in Paris, he carried with him a letter of credit signed by his millionaire rancher father, L.J. Rose (for which the city of Rosemead, California was named). This letter gave Guy permission to purchase whatever and whenever he needed something. However, Guy opted not use it. Rather, just as his father, he was determined to make it on his own.

Guy Rose first traveled to Giverny from 1890-1891, at which time his work began to undergo a transformation combining his academic training with the new *Impressionist's* vibrant palette and looser brushwork. In Paris of 1895, he married the talented illustrator/author, Ethel Boardman. After a few years in the U.S. and just after the turn of the century, Ethel and Guy returned to Giverny where they spent eight years of their lives becoming more involved with the Giverny Plein-Air movement as popularized by the most cele-

brated resident of Giverny, Claude Monet.

In 1912, Guy and Ethel Rose permanently returned to the U.S. and soon settled in Pasadena. Mr. Rose was active in the local art circles, serving for several years on the Board of Governors of the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art. He was also Director of the Stickney Memorial School of Fine Arts in Pasadena, a member of the Laguna Beach Art Association, and a member of the largest and most powerful art organization, the California Art Club.

During his early twenties, Guy Rose began to experience a number of physical ailments which many years later was diagnosed as an adverse reaction to lead poisoning, possibly initiated by his childhood gunshot wound. Since lead was a basic component of oil paints, Guy Rose was forced to stop painting at the burgeoning age of thirty.

For ten years Guy Rose did not paint in oils. After age 40, he occasionally painted in oils, and at age fifty-three, at the height of his popularity, Guy Rose suffered a debilitating stroke. His many years of lead poisoning may have contributed to his sudden incapacitation. Sadly, Mr. Rose could no longer paint. After four years, Guy Rose died at his home in Pasadena, but he left behind a rich legacy of art



What is apparent in the work as a whole is the artist's sense of refinement, elegance and a love for quiet solitude.

and a glimpse into an artist's intimate view of the world.

Seen at the opening night reception for the Guy Rose exhibition was **Paul Bockhorst**, no doubt collecting information on his upcoming four-part documentary on the early *California Impressionists* due to air on public television in September of 1996. Also seen at the reception was **Roy Rose**, grand-nephew of the artist. Roy Rose expressed his excitement over the exhibition by saying, "I've been working on this retrospective for over ten years, it's wonderful to see it finally come together." The Executive Director of The Irvine Museum, **Jean Stern**, added, "What makes this exhibition so special to California is that the public is able to see a collection of work that is much admired not only for its intrinsic beauty, but also because it is unique and so very rare. Unique, because of Monet's distinct influence, and rare, because Guy Rose was not able to paint many works."

This retrospective of 64 paintings by Guy Rose was initially exhibited earlier this year at The Oakland Museum in Oakland, California and is currently on view at The Irvine Museum in Irvine, California through February 24, 1996.

What is apparent in the work as a whole is the artist's sense of refinement, elegance and a love



Marguerite, ca. 1918

o/c 18"×15"

COLLECTION OF TERRY AND PAULA TROTTER

for quiet solitude. These qualities are evidenced in such works as *The Blue Kimono, circa 1910* and *Marguerite, circa 1918*. In his post-student figurative oil paintings, Guy Rose seemed to favor a single subject, one who was not concerned with the viewer, but engrossed in a private, pensive world.

In Guy Rose's landscape paintings, in particular those of California which he considered to be "the land of plenty", the artist emphasized a sense of

exceptional beauty and limitless grandeur. This emphasis is most prevalent in his statement painting, *Laguna Eucalyptus, circa 1916*. The tall eucalypti reach in proud stature toward the sky while the curves of the gently rolling clouds are repeated in the shape of clusters of leaves in the trees. The curve in the foreground, coupled with the pale violet horizon, gives a feeling of endless expansion. The perspective is such that the viewer feels insignificant. *Laguna Eucalyptus*,

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BLACKSHEAR continued from page 5
or more to complete – Blackshear may sculpt a figure before he paints it – so each image is also reproduced by the Greenwich Workshop, and editions in the thousands sell out quickly.

Blackshear's images, in the millions, also circulate as postage stamps. For the United States Post Office, Blackshear has created twenty stamps with a range of themes – *America's Stage Coach Days*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Beau Jester*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Joe Louis*, *Black Heritage*, and four stamps honoring *American Jazz*, which are currently available. Blackshear also illustrated a commemorative stamp booklet, published by the Post Office, entitled, *I have a Dream*, which features twenty-eight portraits of Black Americans. The original paintings for this became a touring exhibit launched at the Smithsonian in 1991.

Blackshear has also just completed a line of figurines called

Ebony Visions, with the first edition selling out in one month. He insisted on going beyond Black-American stereotypes and developed the series to show people of color from around the world in productive roles as students, teachers, and family members.

Today, Blackshear lives comfortably in Colorado Springs in a house filled with Arts and Crafts, Mission, and Tiffany furnishings. A local gallery has recently honored him by changing its name to *The Blackshear Gallery*, and will be featuring Blackshear prints and original work. His hard work and perseverance have paid off. But, as Blackshear says, "All the fame doesn't mean much." Like so many successful and harried artists, he finds he spends too many precious hours trying to meet deadlines and manage the details of business. Blackshear's dream now is to have peace of mind and simply more time to paint those special images from within.

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Paul Bockhorst and Roy Rose at opening reception for Guy Rose.

above all paintings, expresses Guy Rose's belief that human ambition is minuscule compared to the power of nature.

Much of the material in this article was compiled from the 159-page color illustrated book, Guy Rose: American Impressionist by Will South, published in 1995 by The Oakland Museum and The Irvine Museum. This is recommended reading for any artist, collector, or historian who is interested in the complete account of the travels, works, and life of this remarkable artist. ISBN # 1-882140-06-0 for hardback and ISBN # 1-882140-07-9 for paperback, available through De Ru's Fine Arts and Books 310/920-1312.

Our Thanks

and APPRECIATION goes to

SCOTT HASKINS

ART CONSERVATOR

for a most intriguing slide presentation at the November CAC meeting on the conservation of paintings. The audience was enthralled with seeming "magic" which Mr. Haskins was able to perform on restoring badly damaged paintings. Of special interest were the before and after slides showing Mr. Haskins' herculean efforts in restoring the walls behind the Dean Cornwell and Albert Herter murals at the Los Angeles Public Library. For more information on the preservation of art and collectibles, look for Scott Haskins' new book, *How to Save Your Stuff from a Disaster*, soon to be available at bookstores.

For restoration work, MR. HASKINS may be contacted at the FINE ART CONSERVATION LABORATORIES in Santa Barbara, CA, 805/564-3438.