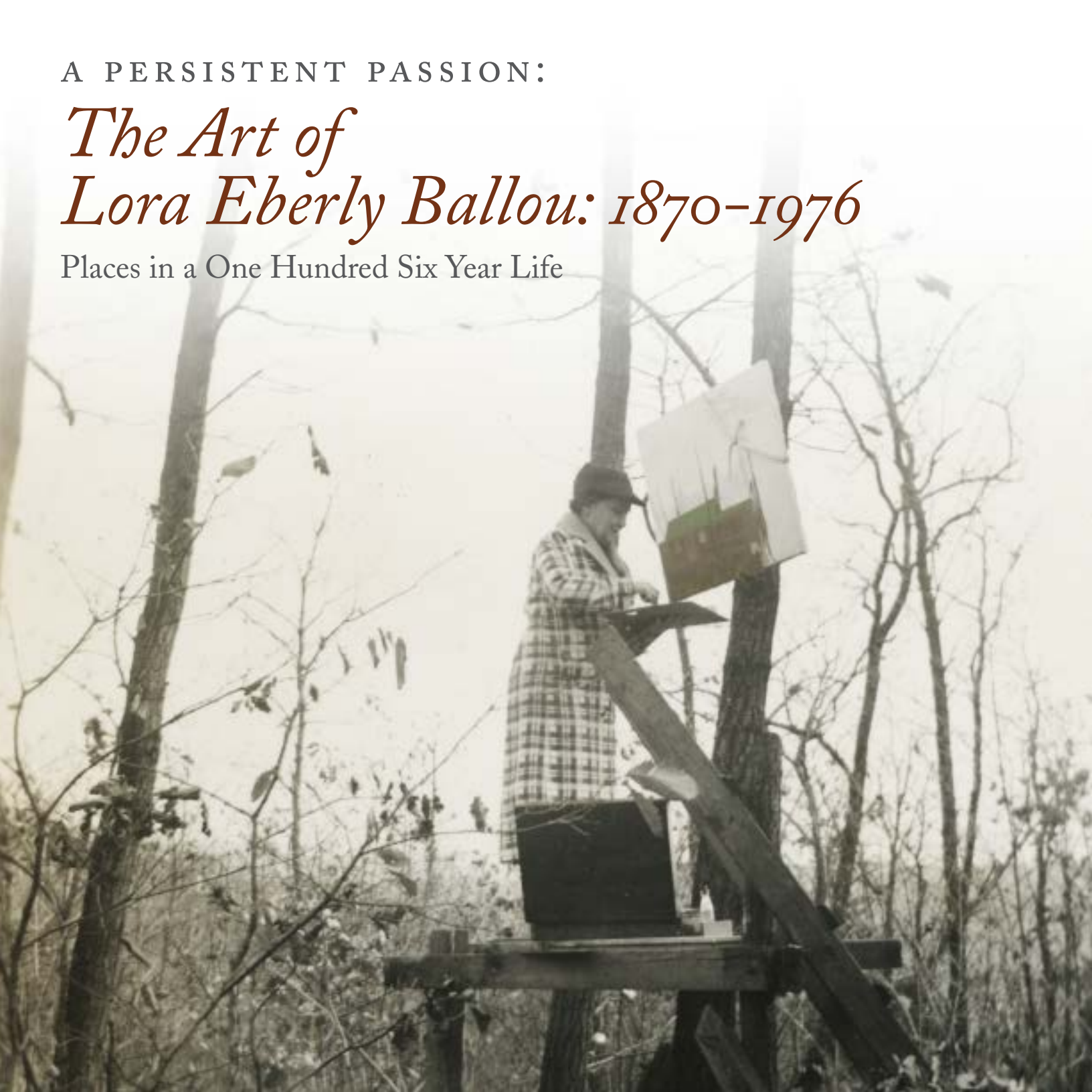


A PERSISTENT PASSION:

*The Art of  
Lora Eberly Ballou: 1870-1976*

Places in a One Hundred Six Year Life





LORA EBERLY BALLOU: 1870 - 1976

First Printing in conjunction with

A PERSISTENT PASSION:

*The Art of Lora Eberly Ballou: 1870-1976*

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September 27, 2012 - January 31, 2013

Old Town Hall Museum, Stamford, CT

Sponsored by Robert M. and Patricia C. Phillips

Supported by the City of Stamford, Michael A. Pavia, Mayor and

Old Town Hall Redevelopment Agency

Guest Curators:

Valerie A. Cooper, Fine Art Consultant & Appraiser and Lina Morielli, Artist & Arts Advocate

Catalogue essay: © Sophia Gevas, 2012

Timeline research: Valerie A. Cooper, 2012

Art Direction: Lina Morielli

Graphics: Connacher Design and Marcel Biro Design

Art Restoration: Labriola Frame and Art Gallery

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*2nd Solo Art Exhibition at* Montclair Historical Society

April 27, 2014 - July 20, 2014

The Charles Shultz House (Evergreens), Montclair, NJ 07042

Sponsored by Robert M. and Patricia C. Phillips

Supported by The Montclair Historical Society gratefully receives an operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State

Guest Curators: Susanna Baker, Studio Montclair, Valerie A. Cooper, Picture That LLC & Lina Morielli, Arts Advocate

Catalogue essay: Mike Farrelly, Town Historian

Art Direction: Lina Morielli

Graphics: Connacher Design and Marcel Biro Design

Cover Image: Lora Ballou at her easel, Oakland, New Jersey, 1937

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INTRODUCTION:

## *Rediscovering an Artist*

For almost all of my life I thought of my grandmother, Lora Eberly Ballou (Gam), as an extraordinary, quiet, little woman who over a very long life had witnessed an incredible variety of historical events, traveled practically everywhere in this world, and lived in a grand house that provided my brother and me with endless memories of youthful experiences and adventures. We were aware of her painting, but it was not central to our family life, and visits to her home were more or less “structured” events where being on your best behavior was the order of the day.

I do remember when I was around nine or ten, wandering into her 3<sup>RD</sup> floor studio on a week-end sleep-over as she was struggling with a new technique of pallet knife paint application. Rather than continue to labor in frustration she decided to set her work aside and engage me in helping her with a rather laborious clean up activity. Mostly she painted out of family view, and this activity was never a primary conversation topic. Her finished art was often given away to friends and family, or donated to the local hospital; thus we never saw it as an entire collection. However, as time passed and homes were sold, my wife Pat and I made the effort to collect, store, and maintain the Lora Ballou art along with other objects of family history.



*Lora with son in law, John Phillips  
and grandson John, 1939*

The genesis for this exhibition came while attending the celebration of Governor-elect Malloy at the restored Old Town Hall. Pat commented on its appropriateness as an art gallery, and the benefit to Stamford downtown if it became an exhibition hall. That night *artist* Lora Eberly Ballou materialized as we reevaluated her paintings for a public viewing. We gained reinforcement and support of this project from the Board of Old Town Hall, and the team of art professionals we assembled to create this exhibition.

Rediscovering the art of Lora Eberly Ballou, and making it public celebrates the artistic talent of an extraordinary woman previously known to us simply as GAM.

*Bob Phillips*





*Lora and John's 50th Wedding Anniversary 1949*  
*Front row from left: Daughter Harriet, grandson Bob Phillips, Lora and John Ballou*  
*Back row from left: Grandson John B. Phillips, John Phillips and daughter Margaret*



*Lora (far right) with school mates in school play, 1892*



*Lora (upper right) with friends, 1896*

A PERSISTENT PASSION:

*The Art of Lora Eberly Ballou:*  
*1870–1976*

Lora Eberly Ballou was a unique woman who was, at one and the same time, both of her time and ahead of her time; on the one hand, comfortable with her “traditional” life but always creating room for her “aspirational” life.

She lived during a time of enormous change in this country. In her youth, the last quarter of the 1800s, she lived in an agrarian society in Ohio where the seasons were distinct, the phasing of the moon lit the night skies, and the horse and buggy was the primary mode of transportation. By the time she died in, 1976, she had witnessed—on a television screen, from the suburbs of New York City—the landing of a man on the moon.

At a time when it was difficult for any woman to pursue a passion for painting, and as the world dramatically changed around her, she spent much of her 106 years doing the thing she most loved—creating images of her surroundings on canvas.



*Lora, plein air painting, 1932*

She was born in Bowling Green, Ohio, on March 1, 1870. Her father was a successful lawyer and the family lived on a large farm outside the city. Her formative years were spent during the Gilded Age, that period after the Civil War marked by unparalleled economic growth and the beginnings of a modern industrial society.

While we don't know the details of her early education, in those times most "cultured" young women would have been taught to read, write, sew and embroider, play a musical instrument and, perhaps, paint watercolors or paint on china.

University attendance was very rare, and this was especially so for women. This progressive woman attended Ohio Wesleyan University and was registered in the Academic Department's "Literary Course" during the 1889-90 academic year. This course of study included Latin, Mathematics, History, Rhetoric, English, Natural Science and Geography and required that all young ladies live in a special house on campus.



*Lora's Mother, Harriet Chubb Eberly*



*Lora's Father, William Eberly*



*The Eberly Home in Bowling Green, Ohio, circa 1870s*

*John Ballou, early 1900s*

With a lovely face, dark hair and brown eyes, she must have been quite a catch. In an era when young, attractive and relatively wealthy women married very young, Lora was an anomaly.<sup>1</sup> She was 29 years old when she married 25-year-old John Ballou in 1899.

The Ballou's, a Huguenot family, originally fled France for England, and some of its members came to America in the mid-1600's. A well-known and distinguished New England family, their members included Universalist theologians, ministers and the first President of Tufts University. John Ballou was born in Wilmington, Vermont, to Winslow Faxton Ballou and Hattie Northrop. At that time many members of the Ballou family lived in the general area and were engaged in farming, commerce, banking, politics and the ministry. When Faxton passed away, Hattie brought her son, John, to Ohio, remarried and settled in Bowling Green, Ohio.

John attended the University of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio and The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. He then spent five years as Secretary and Treasurer of the Royce and Coon Grain Company before joining Sam Vail in the Vail & Co., a book publishing business. Before long, it was the Vail-Ballou Press with a plant in Binghamton, NY, and sales offices on Fifth Avenue in New York City.<sup>2</sup>



*Lora with her daughters, Margaret (seated)  
and Harriet, 1913*



*Montclair Home, built 1898,  
purchased by the Ballou's in 1926*

The couple had two daughters and Lora had domestic help with managing a large, elegant home in Montclair, New Jersey.<sup>3</sup>

In the late 1800s, Montclair, New Jersey, was a community of artists and collectors. Until his death in 1894, the noted landscape painter, George Inness, was one of the town's inhabitants. The Montclair Museum was founded in 1914 and was formed with the goal of integrating and exhibiting the best of American and Native American works, with a part of the museum dedicated to promoting artists from the area.

The museum provided educational programs, lectures, workshops and classes. In 1914, the Ballous lived a mile away and Lora Ballou, age 44, chose to take classes and also exhibited there.

Ballou was a lifelong student and was always attempting to improve her work. In addition to her studies at the Montclair Museum, she also attended classes at the Grand Central Art School, which opened in 1923, on the 7TH floor above the east wing of the Grand Central Terminal. Directed by John Singer Sargent and Daniel Chester French, the School's first year teachers included painters Edmund Greacen and Nicolai Fechin, and it soon became one of the largest art programs in New York City.





*Lora and John Ballou, early 1900s*

Living so close to the city, there was ample opportunity to view exhibits such as the famous Armory Show in 1913 and Alfred Stieglitz's 291 Gallery. In 1907, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the bastion of traditional academic art, acquired a work by Renoir and, in 1910, a work by Matisse. The chances are that Lora Ballou viewed many of these works and chose to follow the philosophy of artists such as Sargent, who felt that realism would always be the more lasting style and that modern works were experiments that would not endure the test of time. Furthermore, Lora's works were based upon her life and her surroundings. She was fascinated by the changing seasons and the variety in nature that must have been impressed upon her in her early years.

According to his daughter, Margaret, John Ballou was amusing and witty and her parents often entertained formally. He was "proper, distant, very clever, and was most remembered for his outrageous temper, which he reminded everyone was difficult for him to control."





*Cabin in the Woods*  
Oil on canvas, 26" x 28"

*Lora at her easel painting the family cabin, "Cabin in the Woods," in Oakland, New Jersey, 1937*



*Drawings from a sketchbook*

As an artist married to a successful businessman, Lora's time was spoken for at dinners, attending the opera, or other social events. However, she always managed to carve out a time and a space for her artistic endeavors. She had a studio, but is remembered for setting up her easel in various parts of their home to create her works. She is seen in photos throughout these years at family gatherings, at her easel, painting a landscape, or with a sketchbook in hand, while surrounding images are of the family group enjoying an afternoon having drinks and relaxing. Her passion for recording places and nature around her meant that her leisure time was devoted to these pursuits.

The couple's homes in Montclair had beautiful gardens. Her interest and passion for gardening and creating beautiful spaces around her homes seems very natural as they provided the perfect subject matter for her explorations of color and atmosphere in still-lives. She could create landscapes where the many flowers that she would depict in her works would mean more to her than cut blooms. She also had cutting gardens that enabled her to create the arrangements that she interpreted.

Her compositions were varied and, perhaps because she belonged to garden clubs, she was exposed to the various styles of flower arrangement.



*Early Summer Garden*  
Oil on canvas, 23" x 19.75"



*Expressive Branches*  
Oil on canvas, 19.5" x 23.5"



Oval Arrangement  
Oil on canvas, 29.5" x 24.5"

During the Victorian era, when Lora was maturing, flowers had very specific meanings that we have forgotten today. These were well-known, and to avoid complications small dictionaries were printed to explain them, since often they were used to convey secret messages. Meaning could change simply through the selection of blooms, their color and sometimes even their disposition—whether they were displayed rightside-up or upside-down. Since Lora came of age in the 1890s, this language would have been familiar to her. Whether these blooms had any meaning beyond the careful arrangement of shape, color and proportions is lost to us now as we study her works—we only know that she had a passion for depicting them.

Of Ballou's paintings that remain, the subject matter is divided equally between landscapes and flower arrangements. It is interesting to note that although she painted from life, there are no paintings of her daughters, her husband or other family members. This activity was her's alone. (Ballou seldom painted figures, except for these two paintings where she experimentally inserted figurines into the landscape, on page 43.) Instead, she concentrated on landscapes created "en plein air" or set up floral arrangements in varied vases, some formal, others casual—a cut glass bowl, a painted tin can, a ceramic vase, an urn. The works are not dated and we can only speculate on the order of their creation. This was a very personal art, consisting of nature and the objects around her. In a time when it was not easy or expected that a woman of her stature would engage passionately in such an activity, she made art a central focus of her life.



*Wooded Riverbank*  
Oil on canvas, 23.5" x 17.75"



*Fall River*  
Oil on canvas, 17.5" x 23.5"



*Lakeside Home*  
Oil on canvas, 11.5" x 15.5"



*Window View*  
*Oil on canvas, 29.25" x 50.25"*





*Fall Bounty*  
Oil on canvas, 23.5" x 19.5"

Ballou's still-lives exhibit a variety of flowers, vases, fabrics and settings evocative of a beautiful, serene space surrounding the flowers. There is a natural liveliness in the depiction of the flowers that indicates the joy she must have found in them. Although Ballou never strayed from the actual colors of the flowers that she portrayed, her finely tuned sense of hue, value and a flair for the dramatic served her well in her still-lives.

In *Fall Bounty*, a classical urn is filled with mums. A spill of grapes flows out of it, leading down to an unusual arrangement of fruits and vegetables; a pomegranate, tomato, lemon, orange and banana, on a slightly disarranged and carefully articulated doily that has an embroidered edge.

In a complex composition, *Window View*, the flowers are placed in a ceramic vase on a dark, highly polished wood table, set in front of a window. An elegant drape of lace curtain frames the left, behind a graceful, empty, blue-and-gold pitcher that has painted flowers on it. A small elephant figurine, situated between the vases, points to the vase of flowers and a family of Amish figures are arranged on the right, adding a touch of whimsy. The vase rests on piece of fabric embroidered with Asian figures. Before one even comes to the carefully painted display of daisies, roses, day lilies, peonies and delphiniums, this work is an ambitious display of the skills required to portray various materials such as see-through lace, embroidered fabric and a porcelain pitcher.



*Lora (second from right) on a cruise with friends, 1929*



*Daughter Margaret, on the cruise, 1929*

One of the walls in the Ballou home became a canvas for the artist. Inspired, she freely painted a scenic mural in her dining room. In *Table Top Roses & Irises*, this mural becomes the background for a still-life, with a freer handling of paint and looser more gestural strokes that show roses spilling out of a lovely, patterned, cut-glass vase on a highly polished table. The reflections on the table are lightly suggested. Again, the items in this work indicate a woman whose wealth could have easily allowed for a life of leisure, but she avidly pursued a life of artistic endeavor.

Ballou was adventurous and enjoyed travel. Her daughter Margaret traveled with her on the first of many overseas trips in 1929. This trip, and subsequent ones during the Depression, indicate the viability of the family business during difficult times, where it appears their lifestyle of the 1920s and 30s was not constrained by financial issues.

*Table Top Roses & Irises*  
Oil on canvas, 19.5" x 23.5"





*Small Boats in Orlando*  
Oil on canvas, 23.5" x 17.75"



*Arrangement in Yellow*  
Oil on canvas, 19.75" x 23.5"



*Watering Can Arrangement*  
Oil on canvas, 25.75" x 19.875"



*Urn with Dog Figurine*  
Oil on canvas, 21.5" x 17.5"



*Lora on a camel (far right) visiting the Pyramids, 1931*

The family often traveled in winter. A cruise during the winter of 1931 to Tunis, Egypt, Algiers, Greece, Italy and the islands of Malta and Sicily, included a return trip through Paris to London. Photos of her in Egypt with her husband and daughters, elegantly perched upon a camel, show us a woman of sturdy constitution. She would have been 61.

In 1935 they took a cruise from San Francisco, to Panama, the Galapagos, the West Indies, Society Island, Morea Island, Tahiti, Bora Bora, New Guinea and the Philipines.

The objects she collected recorded her journeys but were also artfully installed in her homes. She purchased furniture as well as small items that she included in her still-lives, documenting her trips: vases, still in the family collections, were placed next to carved elephants (which she collected); small figurines are placed on a table, adding some personal meaning to her compositions.



*Lilies and Mums*  
*Oil on canvas, 23.5" x 19.5"*



*River Bank with Red Chimney Home*  
*Oil on canvas, 17.5" x 23.5"*



*Roses and Mums*  
*Oil on canvas, 23.625" x 27.75"*





*Yellow Chrysanthemums*  
*Oil on canvas, 23.5" x 29.75"*

*Drawings from a sketchbook*

She sketched as she traveled, making notes of the type of exotic flowers or plants that she encountered, often indicating where she found them as a type of journal. The carts featured in her sketchbook were from Java, Ceylon and Sumatra. A photograph in her travel albums indicates the source material for a Samoan hut in her work, *South Pacific*.

In *Change of Season* an Asian figurine is placed on the left, in the shadow of a large vase of flowers. Again, Ballou uses a fluid brush stroke to capture the fall arrangement of autumn leaves and yellow and white chrysanthemums. The dark background and deep hues of the leaves seem to push these light-colored, exuberant blooms toward the viewer. A few leaves have fallen to the table below and balance the drooping stems and flowers to the right. This careful composition includes a glass vase, another study in difficult rendering.

In *Bell Flowers*, the flowers are placed in a bowl that is supported by an Asian-inspired, wooden, three-footed stand of carved elephants. Although she has difficulty articulating the curve of the table coming forward, she has elegantly indicated the carved edge of the table on either side of the cloth. In *Arrangement with Star Lilies*, the small elephant figurines and carved box also demonstrate her increasing skill and looser hand in the lively bouquet of late summer flowers.





*Change of Season*  
Oil on canvas, 26" x 35.5"



*Bell Flowers*  
*Oil on canvas, 23.25" x 19.25"*



*Arrangement with Star Lilies*  
*Oil on canvas, 37.25" x 29.5"*

From horizontal to vertical to oval, Ballou experimented with the sizes and shapes of her compositions. The flower arrangements tell us about the seasons of her gardens and what was in bloom at different times of the year.

Her travels contributed to her landscape works as well. For many years, she wintered alone in Orlando, Florida, and stayed at the Orange Court Hotel. Her days were spent depicting a long-ago time in a sleepy southern town, in a tropical climate.<sup>4</sup> *Dock in Orlando* shows us three rowboats on the water, tied to a dock, with palm trees and graceful, sweeping, Spanish moss. The pink-hued landscape and sky sport three gulls. The strokes are even more loose and gestural, almost impressionistic, and contribute to the languid feel of summer. A tropical ocean in pastel colors in *Florida Waves* is in direct contrast to what appear to be the crashing waves of the Maine seacoast in *Northern Coast*, which indicates a continued progression of her looser brush strokes and the use of a palette knife.



*Dock in Orlando*  
*Oil on canvas, 17.5" x 23.75"*



*Florida Waves*  
*Oil on canvas, 19" x 27"*





*Northern Coast*  
*Oil on canvas, 17.5" x 27.5"*



*NYC Park*  
Oil on canvas, 23.25" x 27.25"

In *Toney's Brook*, she depicts Montclair in a winter snow scene. *NYC Park* is an ambitious view of Madison Square Park, with skyscrapers in the distance, seen from a high-rise apartment that the couple rented for the winter months in 1944. Fall's glorious colors are shown to us in *Northern Autumn*, another evocative, carefully observed light-filled landscape.

Ballou decided to paint images of her husband's birthplace. John Ballou was very interested in Ballou genealogy and his heritage. Determined to create this work to commemorate his hometown, she traveled there with William, the husband of the couple who were in service to the family, and spent several days there. The rolling hillside in glorious bloom, in *Midday Vermont Summer*, is in Wilmington, Vermont. Under the shade of a large red and black umbrella, we see the artist, in an unusual self-portrait, documenting her interest in painting outdoors. Created in impressionist-influenced strokes and colors, we see a riot of flowers in the foreground. It is fascinating to note that she has inserted herself in a kind of self-portrait—the only one we have—being depicted from behind, alone in the middle ground, arm stretched out toward the canvas, while blissfully pursuing her passion at her husband's birthplace.



*Toney's Brook*  
*Oil on canvas, 15.875" x 19.875"*



*Northern Autumn*  
Oil on canvas, 11.5" x 15.5"



*Midday Vermont Summer*  
Oil on canvas, 11.5" x 15.5"

As a result of her generous nature, we no longer possess many of the paintings that Lora Eberly Ballou created. She often gave them as gifts or donated them to institutions. In family photos, we can see them gracing the walls of their living spaces. The nursing home she later lived in was also decorated with her works. After she could no longer set up her easel, staff members there recall her creating small yarn dolls that were sold to benefit Greystone Hospital, in New Jersey, allowing her one last outlet for her creative spirit.

Sophia Gevas



*Lora Ballou at 103 years of age*

## Essay Notes

<sup>1</sup> We do not know if Ballou held any feminist beliefs; however, there were organizations that were active at that time. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was an American women's rights organization formed in May 1890 as a unification of the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). The NAWSA became the parent organization of hundreds of smaller local and state groups and helped to pass women's suffrage legislation at the state and local level. The NAWSA was the primary promoter of women's rights to vote by pushing for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing women's voting rights and was instrumental in winning the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920.

<sup>2</sup> The family moved to Plainfield, New Jersey, then spent two years in Binghamton, NY, before moving permanently to Montclair, NJ.

<sup>3</sup> In 1926, the Ballou's moved to another home, on 15 Prospect Terrace, around the corner from the museum, that was less costly to maintain, and reflected a difficult business climate for the press. However, the new home still had 11 fireplaces, a billard room, music room, a library, and a married couple as live-in staff. The home was featured in *Scientific American*, in April 1898.

<sup>4</sup> Although we do not have accurate records of her exhibits, she did exhibit at the Orlando Museum of Art, in 1924.

Sophia Gevas (BFA Miami University, 1976) is currently the Education Outreach Director at Silvermine Art Center in New Canaan. She also attended L'Université D'Aix-Marseilles, L'Ecole Des Beaux Arts, Aix-En-Provence, France and was apprenticed to renowned sculptor Rueben Nakian. Her works have been exhibited in many venues in the United States, Greece and Cyprus and are in numerous collections, including the Pepsi-Co Collection.

She was a co-founder of the Loft Artists Association in Stamford, Connecticut. Gevas was the Director of The Gallery of Contemporary Art at Sacred Heart University, from its inception in 1989–2012 where she curated over 100 exhibitions, with lectures, panel discussions and outreach programs. She developed a university art collection of donated contemporary works, publically installed, to enable continual accessibility for the community. Gevas also created and administered a Voluntary Percent for Art program that commissioned seven site-specific works of art, with a self-guided Art Walk brochure of those works and others on long-term loan.



*Landscape with Couple*  
Oil on canvas, 14" x 22"

*Ballou seldom painted figures, except for these two paintings where she experimentally inserted figurines into the landscape.*



*Landscape with Colonial Figures*  
Oil on canvas, 14" x 22"



*Green Glass Bowl*  
*Oil on canvas, 15.75" x 11.75"*



*Gladiolas*  
*Oil on canvas, 23.75" x 19.75"*





*Serene Green Waterside*  
Oil on canvas, 23.5" x 31.5"



*Orlando Birds*  
Oil on canvas, 20.5" x 25.5"

*Untitled*  
*Oil on canvas, 22.25" x 28.25"*

*On loan from the collection of*  
*Judith (Judy) Black, Shoreham, NY*



Upon recently learning about the Lora Eberly Ballou exhibit via the internet, Judy made contact with the curators and explained with enthusiasm her connection.

“In 1973, my dear late husband and I received the Lora Eberly Ballou painting as a fifth anniversary gift from his parents, May and Ira Black. They were art lovers and indicated that we should have (at least) one piece of lovely ‘real’ art in our home. They selected and purchased the painting at an event which, with a vague memory of the conversation, may have been a benefit auction for Montclair Hospital in Montclair, NJ. May and Ira were delighted to tell us what they knew about Lora Ballou and included an article about her with the painting. It was my impression that they knew about her, but did not know her personally.

My wonderful in-laws, Reverend Dr. Ira D. Black and Reverend E. May Gabel Black, were both ordained Congregational ministers. They were members of the Watchung Congregational Church in Montclair and had many friends and professional associates in the First Congregational Church in Montclair where Lora Eberly Ballou was a member for over forty years. Ira worked in Manhattan for the Board of Homeland Ministries of the United Congregational Church. May, an accomplished pianist and harpist, left the ministry to raise their four sons, and after the youngest son graduated from high school (1964) she accepted employment as secretary to the Director of Montclair Hospital.

Richard R. Black (1943-1997), my husband, was the second son and was an educator in the Three Village Schools on Long Island. I (Judy) am an educator, retired from Three Village Schools, and also ‘retired’ from adjunct positions at Adelphi University and Hofstra University.

We always cherished the painting and I’m pleased to loan it for the exhibit.”

*Lora Eberly Ballou: 1870-1976*

Places in a One Hundred Six Year Life

# *Lora Eberly Ballou in Montclair*



*The Charles Shultz House (Evergreens), Montclair, NJ*

*“Montclair’s natural resources as a residence town are real and permanent. It is situated twelve miles west of the Hudson River, on the east side of Watchung Mountain, and has an elevation ranging from 300 to 700 feet. The country is wonderfully picturesque, much of it still rural in aspect, and well-wooded with oaks, chestnuts, maples, and other native trees. To the east there is a broad and impressive landscape view with the high towers of New York City visible by day and its magic lights at night. To the west, from the Mountain top, one looks out upon a reach of graceful valley with all the charm and beauty that such a landscape feature affords.”*

*John Nolen*

*Montclair: The Preservation of Its Natural Beauty and  
Its Improvement as a Residence Town 1909*

When Lora Eberly Ballou and her husband, John, moved to Montclair around 1910, Montclair was the picturesque suburban community described above. Like many other successful New York businessmen, John Ballou enjoyed the convenience of Montclair’s relatively new commuter train line that gave him ready access to his Manhattan office while allowing the Ballous to raise their family in this sophisticated and beautiful suburban setting. As was common to women of her social status, Lora presided over their fine homes, raised the children, and attended social and cultural events both in Montclair and New York City. Of course, Lora also pursued her own artistic endeavors.

The Ballous lived first on Lincoln Street, then on Watchung Avenue, then briefly in an interesting house on South Fullerton Avenue built by spice merchant, Samuel Wilde. Samuel had wanted the house to look like a church, so the house came with its own pipe organ and a

second-floor library big enough to hold community meetings. It was later home to a Carnegie Steel and U.S. Steel man, William Dickson. Unfortunately, the house burned down and the Social Services Building now stands on the spot.

The place the Ballous called home for the longest period was 15 Prospect Terrace. Prospect Terrace is a short street situated on a small rise on First Mountain, affording a view of New York City. The house was written up in *Scientific American Building Edition* in 1898, with engravings of both the interior and exterior.

### **PRESTIGIOUS NEIGHBORHOOD**

Prospect Terrace was home to several successful people including John Ballou, who founded the Vail-Ballou Press, a publishing company. Their neighbors at 10 Prospect Terrace were John G. and Anna Wright. John was the president of the (Joseph) Tetley Tea Co. T. (Thomas) Albeus and Kathleen Adams built 24 Prospect Terrace, a home with graceful verandas known as “The Terraces.” Thomas and his brother made their fortune by selling their Chicago meat packing company to a joint venture of the Swift Company and Armour Meat Packing. They went on to found a successful chain of cold storage warehouses near New York. Interested in getting the merchandise in those warehouses into “the City” more quickly, Thomas became chairman of the Interstate Bridge and Tunnel Commission and is often called the “Father of The Holland Tunnel.”

***The Artists' Colony***

*In the 1870s and 80s, when Montclair was a bit more rural, it was home to a colony of artists. They were attracted to Montclair by its beauty and the stature of landscape artist, George Inness, who lived on Grove Street. They often met to discuss their theories and ideas. Although the artists in Lora's time probably didn't congregate as often as they did in the late 19th century, they still found Montclair to be a natural place to live and work. Montclair provided the quiet and beauty of a suburb while at the same time it offered easy access to cultural splendors of New York or in Montclair itself.*

Jasper and Annie Rand lived on Hawthorne Place opposite Prospect Terrace, where the Hawthorne Towers now stand. Jasper and his brother started the Rand Drilling Company, which later became the giant, Ingersoll Rand Company. Jasper and Annie's house was relatively small, but was replaced by their daughter Florence's large mansion. Florence, a painter and a patron of the arts, was married to Henry Lang, an executive with Ingersoll Rand. Florence was instrumental to the founding and first major acquisitions of the Montclair Art Museum. While it is likely that Florence Lang and Lora traveled in the same social circle, and it is tempting to say they were good friends and influenced each other's artwork, there is no record of that. We know that Lora kept her painting more or less to herself.

One neighbor we can confidently say Lora visited was her daughter, Margaret (Peggy), and son-in-law, John Phillips. In the 1940s, John, Margaret and sons John B and Robert lived on the 3RD floor of 15 Prospect Terrace, before moving to Princeton Place.

**SURROUNDED BY THE ARTS**

The atmosphere in Montclair when the Lora and John lived here was conducive to supporting and practicing the arts. In the early part of the 20th century Montclair was the third richest community in America after New York and Morristown. The people who lived here usually focused on their businesses and social events in New York, but

they were not consumed by the City. They also started local theater groups and galleries that rivaled the best in Manhattan. The Montclair Players became the Montclair Orchestra, which evolved into the New Jersey Symphony. The Unitarian Church sponsored the Unity Series, which brought world famous speakers and musicians to Montclair, including Booker T. Washington, Robert Frost, Margaret Sanger, and many others. The art museum Florence Lang and others founded became one of the finest small museums in the country.

The Yard School of Art, originally located in a house on South Fullerton Avenue, was around the corner from 15 Prospect Terrace. The Montclair Art Museum, just a mile from the Ballou home, often displayed works by local artists, as did the Yard School of Art. Kresge's, a department store in Newark, which was a bustling, cosmopolitan city in the early 1900s, was only a few miles away and ran exhibitions featuring 40 or 50 local artists. The American Artists Professional League, headquartered at the Montclair Art Museum, had over 300 members, most of whom lived in Montclair.

Noted local painters, Kathleen Voute and Edith Barry lived only a few blocks away on South Fullerton Avenue. Sculptor, Nellie Dodd Speers also lived nearby on South Mountain Avenue. Although Lora was surrounded by a rich atmosphere of art and artists, she seemed to work independently of them. Whether or not Lora associated with the neighboring artists would be speculation.

Lora was a member of the Montclair Women's Club, and in 1918, she was the club's secretary, leaving a notebook with minutes of meetings from this year. Then, as now, the Women's Club addressed itself to a wide variety of issues. The club presented member paintings every once in a while. If Lora ever showed her work there, the records are now lost in the mists of time.

Lora traveled the world, and those travels were incorporated into her artwork. John and Lora traveled the world including England, Europe, the Mediterranean, Middle East, China, Japan, and the South Seas. However, Montclair was home, and is also featured in her art as seen in the many still life arrangements featuring flowers from her own gardens and landscapes including Montclair's Toney's Brook. She was here when John died in 1957 and spent some of her final years at the Van Dyke Nursing Home on North Mountain Avenue, walking distance from both the Montclair Art Museum and the Shultz House, in which this exhibit is housed. She died in 1976 at the incredible age of 106.

Mike Farrelly, *Town Historian*



*Lora Eberly Ballou: 1870-1976*  
Places in a One Hundred Six Year Life

# *Timeline*



*Lora in 1872*

1844

American painter and printmaker Mary Cassatt is born in Allegheny City, PA.



ca. 1845

African-American sculptor Mary Edmonia Lewis is born in Greenbush, NY.



1870

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is established.



1875

Native-American Indian basket weaver Elizabeth Hickox is born in Karuk Territory, CA.



EARLY 1800'S

Ballou family members relocate to Ohio, including Eliza Ballou (mother of future U.S. President James A. Garfield) from Richmond, New Hampshire.



President James A. Garfield

1870

Lora Eberly is born in Bowling Green, OH to W.S. Eberly and Hattie A. Chubb.



1874

John B. Ballou is born in Wilmington, VT to Winslow Faxton Ballou and Hattie Northrop Ballou.



1844

Texan envoys sign Treaty of Annexation with the United States.

1845

U.S. President James K. Polk's Manifest Destiny announces that the U.S. should expand into the West rapidly.

1871

Stamford's original Town Hall is established in Connecticut as a red brick building in Second Empire and Victorian Gothic style.



1872

Susan B. Anthony was the first person arrested, put on trial and fined for voting.



1879

Thomas Edison invents the lightbulb, three years after Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone.



1888

Painter Vincent Van Gogh completes *Still Life: Vase with Twelve Sunflowers*, two years before he passes away.



1891

Spanish-American painter Mabel Alvarez is born in Hawaii and would become a very prominent artist in California.



1894

Painter George Inness dies in Montclair, New Jersey, having lived there since 1885.



1899

Russian-American sculptor Louise Nevelson is born in Czarist Russia. She would become one of the most important figures in 20th-century American sculpture.



1882

John B. Ballou and his mother, Hattie, relocate to Bowling Green, OH.



1889

Lora Eberly studies at Wesleyan University. Female students are required to live in a special residence.



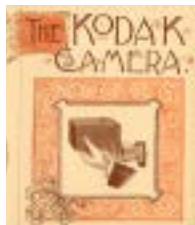
1899

Lora Eberly, marries John B. Ballou in Bowling Green, OH.



1888

Invention of the Eastman Kodak camera begins amateur photography.



1892

Bessie Coleman is born in Atlanta, TX. She would become the first African-American woman to fly a plane.



1893

Colorado grants women the right to vote.



1897

Sculptor Reuben Nakian is born and would live in Stamford, CT from the 1950s until his death in 1986.



1905

African-American painter Lois Mailou Jones is born in Boston, MA. She would become a very influential artist to the Harlem Renaissance.



1913

The Armory Show opens in NYC; organized by artists and exhibiting over 300 works of modern American and European artists.



1914

The Montclair Museum is founded to collect American and Native American works and to promote art and learning.



1917

Painter Georgia O'Keeffe's first solo exhibit is held at 291 Gallery, and organized by photographer Alfred Stieglitz, whom she later would marry.



1902

Lora's daughter Harriet is born in Cleveland, OH.



1905

Lora's daughter Margaret is born Coshocton, OH.



1907

John Ballou joins Vail & Co. book publishing business.

1914

After 2 years in Binghamton, NY, the family moves back to Montclair, NJ and Lora takes classes at the newly established Montclair Museum.

*Ballou family home, Montclair, NJ*



1903

Wright Brothers first flight.



1905

Stamford's original Town Hall was lost in a fire in 1904, but is rebuilt in 1905 as a three-story building in Beaux Arts Style.



1911

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York City kills 146 which would lead to legislation changes to raise safety standards for sweatshop workers.



1914

World War I begins as Germany invades the country of Belgium.



1919

Treaty of Versailles ends World War I.



1923

Grand Central Art School opens on 7th floor of east wing of Grand Central Station, NYC. Painter John Singer Sargent is a founding member.



1929

The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art are established in New York City.



1935

American painter Dorothea Tanning moves to New York to begin her career. She would become a famous female surrealist.



1939

The current Guggenheim Museum in New York City is established as the Museum of Non-Objective Painting and designed by architect Frank Lloyd Wright.



1923

The Grand Central Art School is founded in Grand Central Station. Lora takes classes there.

Lora & John enjoy a game of chess at their Montclair home.



1924

During winter vacations, Lora paints in Orlando, Florida. She exhibits her artwork at the Orlando Museum of Art.



1936

Lora's grandson, John Phillips is born.



1937

Lora paints the family cabin and landscape, while balancing on a makeshift platform.



1938

Lora's grandson, Robert M. Phillips is born.



1920

18th Amendment began prohibition to consume alcohol.

19th Amendment gives women the right to vote.



1924

The Society for Human Rights, the first gay-rights organization is founded in the United States.



1929

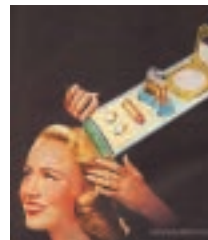
Stock Market crashes, worldwide depression begins.

The 10 year Harlem Renaissance cultural movement ends.



1937

Dow Chemical develops plastics.



1939

Germany invades Poland to start World War II.



1946

American painter Georgia O'Keeffe is the first woman awarded a solo exhibit at MoMA.



1949

American photographer Annie Leibovitz is born in Waterbury, CT. She would be known for her famous portraits.



1954

Cindy Sherman is born in Glen Ridge, NJ. She would become known for depicting the role and representation of women in society with photography.



1959

Chinese-American architect and sculptor Maya Lin is born in Athens, OH. She would become known most for designing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



1943

Lora enjoys spending time with her grandsons.



1944

The Ballou's rented an apartment for the winter months in NYC with a view of Madison Square Park.



1949

Lora and John B. Ballou celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary.



1950s

Lora still consistently sketches and studies to stay in practice, and study floral forms.



1956

Lora still active at the age of 86, shown here with *Small Boats in Orlando*.



1941

Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.



1945

United Nations formed. WW II ended.



1955

African-Americans begin yearlong bus boycott in Montgomery, AL for integration.

The Daughter of Bilitis, the first U.S. lesbian organization is founded.



1956

U.S. Supreme court ends segregation on buses.



1961

Peace Corps founded by U.S. President John F. Kennedy.

Birth Control pills made available.



1964

English sculptor Barbara Hepworth unveils the monumental *Single Form* at the United Nations Headquarters.



1974

African American painter Jacob Lawrence has a retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art.



1977

Japanese photographer and artist Hiromi Toshikawa is born in Tokyo. She will become internationally known for her photography.



1964

Lora remains persistent to pursue her life's passion of painting. She has painted dozens of beautiful paintings, and filled many sketchbooks with ideas and studies to be enjoyed by many in the future.



1973

Lora at 103 years old, creating small yarn dolls that were sold to benefit Greystone Hospital, in New Jersey.



1976

Lora passes away at 106 years old.



1963

U.S. President John F. Kennedy signs the Equal Pay Act declaring that women receive the same wages as men. Later that year he is assassinated.



1964

Bay of Tonkin incident begins Vietnam War.



1969

Apollo Project lands man on the moon.



1973

Roe v. Wade establishes women's right to abortion.



1976

Viking Spacecrafts 1 & 2 land on Mars.



## Timeline Notes

In addition to organizing an art exhibit of his grandmother's artwork, exhibition sponsor Robert (Bob) M. Phillips envisioned providing field trips to view "A Persistent Passion" at the Old Town Hall Museum for Stamford Public Schools students, in order to educate them about *artist* Lora Eberly Ballou and Stamford's first public fine art museum.

Upon learning of Bob's vision, Valerie A. Cooper, Art Consultant and co-curator of the Lora Eberly Ballou exhibit, enlisted the assistance of Paul Cusano, Stamford Public Schools Fine Art Content Leader, to bring to fruition. It was Paul Cusano's vision to work in conjunction with Valerie, and develop a six hour Lora Eberly Ballou Professional Development (PD) workshop for all Stamford Public Schools art teachers, in advance of scheduling museum tours for students.

A component of the PD workshop is this Lora Eberly Ballou Timeline; a three-dimensional teaching tool, that chronicles Lora Eberly Ballou's 106 year life, simultaneous with multicultural American Art History and Historical events. We are pleased to announce that the Lora Eberly Ballou Professional Development workshop will be held on November 6, 2012 for all Stamford Public Schools Art Teachers. To view the workshop curriculum and entire three-dimensional Lora Eberly Timeline visit [www.LoraBallou.com](http://www.LoraBallou.com).





