

My Father's World

Heavy metals, varnished layers, drying oil.
This, and a sheet.
And LO the magic happens;
Time bent to practiced craft
Shines jewel-like in captured moments,
Of a man whose word is worth a thousand pictures.
In this world, bridges boldly leap the river
Flashing bright below, from Whitman's Camden
Into Brotherly Love; where the rooftops are
The barbaric yawp:
"Share! Share with me, this amazing THING I saw
And seeing, knew I must show others!"
Where historic mansions and rusting warehouses equally
Glow in memory with the living warmth
Of a thousand fragrant summer days
The scent of soft pretzels, traffic, river breezes,
And the sinus-tickling sense of hot asphalt
Immortalized, somehow, in brushstrokes;
Recorded in the quiver of the artist's hand
On slate and brick and concrete,
As on a phonograph.
The heat that bakes the sunshine cities
Nearly radiant on your face from this
Love song built in light to the city;
A joyous, yearning wake for buildings; the ghosts of history,
Public architecture from another age,
Art Deco facades and classical lines
Built whole from Platonic forms beyond our ken;
Citadels nod heavy at the hubris of glassy towers,
As if to say, "This too shall pass."
But not here.
Not HERE, in this snapshot of the city's beating heart,
Not NOW, in this photograph of the city's soul.
Peopled with immortals, this moment, this glassine NOW
Displayed for you alone, belongs now to the ages.
And beyond the city, stretches the farmland of America's
forever;

Rolling hills and trees and skies that pain the heart;
The unfathomable depth of the blue speaking hope
In a way that makes the heart swell in the chest
With the immensity of creation.
The colors strike the eye with the smell of hay and morning,
The clearing ozone of a shower just gone,
And the tobacco ghost of Red Man on a barn.
The lakes and dells and forests,
The land cleared and green and ready in between.
Laughing streams and darkened bowers of fallen trees
Smell of the rich loam that powers the plants
Tended by these custodians of the earth.
Now feel these slower stories with your eyes;
Peopled with curious cows and clapboard,
Barns and houses aged and fixed and painted,
Aged and fixed and painted again.
Through generations of Pennsylvania Dutch,
Rawboned men built of hickory and leather,



Apple Trees, The Catskills, 1994

High patrician foreheads and aquiline noses
Haloed by the loving landscape
Breathing the iron-rich air of Pittsburgh
The coal dust of the ridges,
The warm dry straw that sifts down from the hay loft;
Gold through the rays of afternoon.
Their wives dimpled smiles overlay
The haughtiness of unassailable respectability
In soft lace and sweater-wearing grace.
And down to us, his family;
Captured more fully than in photos.
In chairs and sofas, mirrors, swings and yards,
Lying, sitting, standing, running.
But beyond, before and ever after
As through the windows, beyond the wallpaper
Of earlier portraits, the city, farms and suburb
Across that landscape the steel rails that built America
Roll out from the demented tunnels and bridges
Of the Three Rivers and into a future
That matters not as yet; as slag and coke
Burn off and reveal the shining backbone of freedom;
Rolled hard and dearly bought with sweat.
And all these moments fall into a work;
This is not nostalgia; this is not memory.
This is not an ode; this is not a dream.
This is a Homeric work, six decades of vision bent
to show others
The beauty of the now, the joy of seeing, of these things,
of everything.
Of you and I and what we both share in the world;
Of people and life and living it.
Of simultaneity and history and hereness and nowness.
This is the warmly-frozen forever of my father's world,
Which he must share with you.
And on my best days,
Those lucky days I am at my best,
I am fortunate to catch a glimpse of it,
Outside his frames of gilt and paint and wood.

by Sean W. Hoffman (2014)

Acknowledgment

I witnessed a reunion of sorts at the Ligonier Valley Museum's recent sculpture exhibition when EvAngelos Frudakis and William Hoffman renewed an acquaintance that dated back to their days at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. It was a meeting of two exceptional artists. They talked candidly and respectfully about people, places and events at the Academy. Today, we are pleased to follow up the Frudakis exhibition with this offering of William Hoffman's artwork.

William M. Hoffman, Jr. has brought his education and experiences, talent and ability to bear on an artistic career that spans over six decades. He is equally adept at portraiture, landscape painting and figure composition. Hoffman's award-winning work can be found in many private and corporate collections, as well as in the New Jersey State Museum. He has been featured in myriad one-man shows and has been included in numerous group shows in the U.S. and abroad.



Rest for a Working Man, 1963

Here in the Ligonier Valley, Hoffman is best known for his bucolic scenes of everyday life on the farm and architectural renderings and paintings that reveal his love of the great outdoors. Cows grazing in the fields or corralled in the barn are fodder for his imagination. Through the work on his canvas, we visit Main Street America's stately buildings or a house in a neighborhood we know. Fly fishing in the Loyalhanna catches his eye. This is one of the Ligonier Valley's native sons doing what he does best . . . creating art with which we can identify.

This retrospective at the Ligonier Valley Museum looks back on a noteworthy career and an impressive body of work. One of my favorite pieces is a graphite-on-paper work from 1963 titled *Rest for a Working Man* . . . it reminds me of my grandfather. I am sure you, too, will have your favorites. There is a lifetime of exceptional artwork to choose from in *Retrospective: William M. Hoffman, Jr.*

This retrospective has been under the capable direction of Site Coordinator Sommer Toffle and I applaud her work on the exhibition. The Museum staff has helped with the exhibition process and program and I thank them for their efforts. The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art is committed to providing its constituents with an interesting, informative and enjoyable art experience. The realization of this commitment is made possible through the generosity and support of our many patrons, a dedicated Museum staff and the public at large.

G. Gary Moyer
Executive Director

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Editors: Travis Mearns and Sommer Toffle

Printer: Laurel Valley Graphics

Catalogue Design: Bonnie Hoffman and
Sommer Toffle

© 2014 Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art

This catalogue is published by the
Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art
Post Office Box 9, Loretto, PA 15940
(814) 472-3920

Hours:

Tuesday through Friday:
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Weekends: 1 to 5 p.m.
Closed Mondays
Open to the public free of charge

Cover: *Standard Steel (Alco), 1963*
Oil on canvas, 25" x 30"

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retrospective William M. Hoffman, Jr.

August 22 through November 9, 2014



Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art
at Ligonier Valley

Curator's Statement

Most days, one can find William M. Hoffman, Jr. painting *en plein air* amongst the Ligonier countryside or Downtown Latrobe, capturing landmark architecture, farms with rolling hills or bubbling wooded streams. His Ligonier studio is full of work from past to present, each offering a palette full of rich color and tranquil beauty. Hoffman brings his subjects to life with an impressionistic style that seems to capture movement and energy with every brushstroke. Hoffman has literally been painting since childhood, and this exhibition reflects on the artist's impressive oeuvre with a collection of fifty-six brilliant paintings and drawings.

Featured in this exhibition is a selection of the artist's most noted figure compositions, portraits and landscapes spanning a sixty-two year career working and painting in Philadelphia, Latrobe, Ligonier and Camden, New Jersey. Born in Blairsville in 1934, Hoffman was a Professor of Fine Arts at Rutgers University from 1967 to 2000 and also chaired the University's art department for more than fifteen years. In 2000, Hoffman retired in Ligonier where he lives and paints today. His breath-taking paintings have been exhibited nationally and internationally and are included in numerous private and public collections. The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley is pleased to be able to offer our patrons this retrospective of one of our region's most accomplished and talented artists.

Sommer Toffle
Coordinator, Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Ligonier Valley

Biography



Self Portrait as a Two Streeter, 1968

William M. Hoffman, Jr. was born in Blairsville, Pennsylvania and grew up in nearby Latrobe. For over three decades he resided in Philadelphia and South Jersey, where he met and married his wife Bonnie (1970) and raised two sons, Sean and George. He currently resides in Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

Upon graduating Latrobe High School in 1951, Hoffman commuted to Pittsburgh to study commercial art at the Simboli School of Art. On the recommendation of a respected artist friend and after a decision to pursue fine art, Hoffman moved to Philadelphia and registered for study at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA). Hoffman put himself through college and later graduate school with the help of scholarships, jobs in the art department of the Philadelphia Bulletin and the Philadelphia Department of Recreation, and later as a substitute teacher in the Philadelphia School System. His college years were interrupted by a two-year stint in the military, which was delayed so he could fulfill a prestigious Cresson Traveling Scholarship Award that included 3 months of travel in Europe. In 1962, Hoffman earned a B.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania through its coordinated program with the PAFA. Hoffman earned his M.F.A. at the Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia in 1967.

From 1967 through 2000, Hoffman taught art and art history at Rutgers University, Camden, New Jersey. During his tenure at the university, Hoffman painted over 70 major works featuring the cityscape of Camden. He is a two-time recipient of a Visual Arts Fellowship Grant from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to execute a series of paintings of historical buildings in Camden and is well represented in the city's art collection.

Upon retiring in 2000 as Professor Emeritus of Rutgers University, Hoffman returned to his Western Pennsylvania roots. He currently maintains a studio in Ligonier where he pursues his passion for painting.

Hoffman's portrait, landscape, cityscape and figure composition paintings have been exhibited in numerous one-person and group shows nationally and in London, England. His work can be found in many private and corporate collections as well as in the New Jersey State Museum.

C A T A L O G U E

Adams Falls, Lynn Run, 2004
Oil on canvas, 36" x 24"

Apple Trees, The Catskills, 1994
Oil on panel, 18" x 25"

Bonnie & Sean, 1974
Oil on canvas, 40" x 26"

Cows, West Chester, 1996
Watercolor on archival paper, 12" x 18"

Fairfield House, Ligonier, PA, 2001
Oil on canvas, 18" x 24"

Fall in Tanoma, 2009
Oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

Fallen Log, 1982
Oil on canvas, 36" x 46"

Falls, The Catskills, 1979
Casein on board, 15" x 20"

Federal Street Bridge, 1974
Oil on canvas, 42" x 30"

Collection of Kym and Sean Hoffman

Front & Arch Sts., Philadelphia, 1968
Oil on canvas, 30" x 36"

Frye Farm from Old Route 30, 2012
Oil on panel, 18" x 24"

Furnace Run, 2010
Casein on board, 15" x 20"
Courtesy of a Private Collector

Goat Lady's Farm, 1989
Oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

Graham Farm, 2010
Oil on canvas, 20" x 30"

House on Baker Hill, 1997
Oil on canvas, 30" x 24"
Collection of Barbara H. Nakles

King George Knupp Farm, 2013
Oil on canvas, 22" x 36"

Kinsey Farm, 2010
Casein on board, 14.5" x 19"

Longhorn Calf I, 2012
Oil on panel, 8" x 10"

Longhorn Calf II, 2012
Oil on panel, 8" x 10"



Falls, The Catskills, 1979

Lowtide, Maine, 1987
Oil on canvas, 36" x 54"
Courtesy of a Private Collector

Loyal Hotel, 1976
Watercolor on archival paper, 22" x 18"

Loyalhanna Creek Triptych I, 2004
Oil on three panels, 10.5" x 39"
Collection of Helen Thorne

Loyalhanna Creek Triptych II, 2006
Oil on three panels, 13.5" x 36"

Mail Pouch, 2004
Oil on panel, 8" x 10"

Main Street Ligonier (Tavern), 2003
Oil on sized paper, 20" x 28"

Marker Farm (Late Summer), 2008
Oil on canvas, 20" x 30"

Marker Farm with Cattle, 2009
Oil on canvas, 24" x 33

McConnaughey Farm IV, 2001
Oil on panel, 11" x 14"

McConnaughey Farm Tractor Shed, 2001
Watercolor on archival paper, 14" x 10"

McGinnis Hospital, 2011
Oil on panel, 16" x 20"

Mom at Her Desk, 1962
Graphite on paper, 11.5" x 17"

NJ Trestle, 1981
Oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Peonies and Roses, 1979
Oil on canvas, 26" x 20"

Pig Iron Pond, Pond of My Youth, 1969
Oil on canvas, 40" x 42"
Collection of Ned J. Nakels, Jr.
and Connie Nakles

Portrait of George (age 7), 1983
Oil on panel, 9.5" x 11"



Self Portrait in Yellow Room, 1956



St. Joseph's from Mechanic Street, 1979

Portrait of Sean at 16, 1990
Oil on canvas, 20" x 24
Collection of Kym and Sean Hoffman

Portrait of the Artist's Mother Reading, 1964
Oil on canvas, 46" x 40"

Railroad Magnate's Home, 2001
Oil on sized paper, 16" x 23"

Ray with Lamb, 2013
Oil on canvas, 10" x 8"

Rest for a Working Man, 1963
Graphite on paper, 10" x 13"

Self Portrait as a Renaissance Man, 1975
Oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

Self Portrait as a Two Streeter, 1968
Egg oil and oil on panel, 26" x 20"

Self Portrait in Yellow Room, 1956
Oil on canvas, 46" x 24"

Shirey Farm II, 2006
Casein on board, 14" x 19"

Shirey Farm, Fall, 2004
Oil on panel, 18" x 22"

Sts. Casimir & Emerich, Johnstown, 2010
Oil on panel, 13.5" x 17.75"

St. Joseph's from Mechanic Street, 1979
Oil on canvas, 32" x 41"

St. Vincent, 2012
Oil on panel, 10" x 15"

Standard Steel (Alco), 1963
Oil on canvas, 25" x 30"

Summer of '76, 1976
Oil on canvas, 49" x 40"

Three Ages of Man, 2003
Egg oil and oil on panel, 30" x 24"

Two Sons and Sunflower, 1978
Oil on canvas, 46" x 36"

Vermont, 1997
Oil on panel, 11.75" x 17.75"

View of Greensburg with Courthouse, 2007
Oil on canvas, 20" x 30"

Wayne's Meadow, Fall, 2003
Oil on panel, 10" x 12"

Wedding Meditation, 1972
Oil on canvas, 46" x 36"

All work is "Courtesy of the artist" except as noted.