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Brassai: Anne Harvey

Press Release:

Anne Harvey: Private Life
steven harvey fine art projects
May 10-June 4, 2017
Opening Reception:
Wednesday, May 10, 6-8 pm



Brancusi: Anne Harvey in his studio, c. 1934

Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects presents the first one-person exhibition of paintings and drawings by **Anne Harvey** (1916-1967) in New York City in over 40 years. The exhibition will present works drawn from across the artist's career- from her precocious early work done while she was still a child, through the surprisingly mature works of her late teens to the increasingly complex art, done before her premature death at age 51 in Paris in 1967.

Anne Harvey's early skills were nurtured by her culturally progressive family. Born in Chicago, her mother, the writer **Dorothy Dudley** was a poet, critic and the author of the first biography of the American writer **Theodore Dreiser**. Anne's aunt, **Katherine Dudley**, introduced her to **Jules Pascin** who drew her when she was twelve. Another aunt, **Helen Dudley**, was a poet, as well as the lover of the English philosopher **Bertrand Russell**, at whose progressive boarding school Anne's younger brother, **Jason Harvey**, was a pupil. A third aunt, **Caroline Dudley** (later married to the French writer **Joseph Delteil**) was a theatrical impresario who brought **Josephine Baker** and the *Revue Negre* to Paris.

While discussing Dorothy Dudley's projected article about his Barnes's murals, **Henri Matisse** was asked to look at Anne's work. He responded by encouraging her towards illustration, praising the element of "fantasie" in her work. She responded by stating her intention to be a "painter." Though she briefly attended **Fernand Léger's** art school, her aunt **Katherine Dudley** introduced her to **Constantin Brancusi**, who became her mentor. A large oil portrait of the Romanian sculptor (which Anne made in 1934, at the age of eighteen) is in the collection of the **The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation**. Two smaller ink drawings of Brancusi from life are included here, as are Brancusi's poignant photographs of Anne.

Family friendships also included **Alexander Calder** and **Joan Miró**, both of whom owned her paintings. **André Masson** was a supporter, writing the introduction to her 1945 exhibition at the Roullier Galleries in Chicago. The English sculptor **Raymond Mason** and his wife **Jeanine Hao**, were among her closest friends in Paris. Jeanine opened a gallery that showed both Raymond and Anne's work.

Giacometti came to see an exhibition of Anne's work at the gallery. He walked in and after a brief discussion, glanced around the room and pointed his thumb behind him and said he'd take "that one."

John Ashbery, in a 1966 *Art News Annual* article about American painters in Paris, mentioned that her admirers included **Alberto Giacometti** and **Jean Helion**, and described her work:

. . . curious metaphysical still lives . . . of copper pots, flowers and chimney corners, etc. (that) look conventional during the first few seconds of glimpsing, but this effect is quickly replaced by a perception of the probing anguish of an almost James-ian dissecting eye. . . . A curious anxiety, tempered by the exhilaration of her novel optics is the result.

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After her death in her studio in 1967, her brother Jason Harvey organized a memorial exhibition for Anne at the Robert Scholkopf Gallery in New York City in 1971. In a review of this exhibition for Art News, **Lawrence Campbell** who had met Anne in Paris in the sixties, described the dizzying qualities of her line:

In her work one can truly sense what the privacy of the expression "travailler après la nature" can mean to an artist as withdrawn and secretive as she was. The act of trying to draw the grain of a board on the studio floor her studio was wherever she was, indoors or out unfailingly triggered imaginative responses. She saw patterns inside other patterns, and these hair-like patterns became quirky fine ink lines or in paintings, paint: meandering, eddying, dissolving, disappearing, then coming into focus elsewhere, as though the wood grain pushed her ever deeper into a world she could see as well as invent at the same time. For someone as addicted to drawing as she was, it is astonishing how broadly she was able to paint. But it was always back to the textures which never quite repeat themselves, to the leaf which edges into a wall and a painting hanging on it, from there into a piano, into a tiled floor, into a jungle of line and hatching. No painter was ever freer from the clichés of modern French art (although she invented a few of her own) or of style (which she had in abundance, but it was entirely her own). Her drawings and paintings are filled with half-open doors and windows, but one can escape just as easily through her brick walls or wooden floors.

Anne Harvey's work was included in both exhibitions of woman artists at **Peggy Guggenheim's** Art of The Century Gallery, *31 Women* in 1943 and *The Women* in 1945.

The day before Marcel Duchamp died, his last correspondence was a note to Anne's brother Jason offering to help him find a suitable gallery for an exhibition of her work.

In one of his few published writings, Brancusi contributed a short text for an exhibition announcement of Anne's work.

Annie is a young girl who does not ask anyone's help to make her paintings.
I tell you this and I assure you, hand in the fire,
That she will continue.
Go see, for me.

Please contact the gallery for further information or images at info@shfap.com or (917) 861-7312.