



The Paintings of John Calvin Stevens

Paul S. Stevens
Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.

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Introduction

IT IS A WITH GREAT PLEASURE THAT Greater Portland Landmarks and the University of New England Art Gallery, Portland Campus, present the exhibition, *The Paintings of John Calvin Stevens*. Stevens is one of Maine's major cultural treasures. He is remembered for his distinguished career from 1880 to 1940 as Maine's leading architect of the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles.

Less well known is Stevens' lifelong passion for painting. From 1882, he was active in the newly formed Portland Society of Art (now the Portland Museum of Art). From 1900 to 1920, Stevens created hundreds of paintings with the Brush'uns, a talented group of *plein air* painters who frequented Cape Elizabeth, Capisic, Stroudwater, and the Casco Bay islands each weekend to capture the changing seasons of nature on their canvases.

This show is the first comprehensive exhibition of Stevens' art work since his death in 1940. It represents the entire range of Stevens' art, including oil paintings, watercolors, and pen and ink sketches. Stevens' art draws inspiration from Maine's natural environment and demonstrates the artist's devotion to the study of nature through art.

Drawn from the collections of family members, private collectors, and institutions, this exhibition offers the first public opportunity in seventy-five years to explore the art of one of the most creative figures in the state's cultural life a century ago. By comprehensively cataloging his work, and

linking it to appreciation for place and inspiration for the built environment, it is our hope to engage artists, students, and all people with interest in the historic landscapes of the Greater Portland and Western Maine regions.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the curators, Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Maine State Historian, and Paul Stevens, architect and John Calvin Stevens' great grandson, who have done a tremendous job in locating the works, and selecting and arranging the exhibition. In addition, our sincere thanks go to the lenders to the exhibition, especially to the entire Stevens family who have generously shared their art with all of us. Generous grants from the Quimby Family Foundation and The Rines-Thompson Fund of the Maine Community Foundation have provided essential support for this project. We offer our appreciation to the preparatory and installation services of Kevin Callahan and Ilana Welch, and to the assistance of Margaret Perkins. Lastly, our colleagues at Greater Portland Landmarks, the University of New England Art Gallery, the Friends of Evergreen Cemetery, and the Maine College of Art have shared their talents in presenting this exhibition and related programs in celebration of John Calvin Stevens' art.

— ANNE B. ZILL, Director of the
University of New England Art Gallery, Portland Campus

— HILARY BASSETT, Executive Director of
Greater Portland Landmarks