



Robert Henry, Griffon, 1960 oil on canvas, 30 x 103"

YOU ARE INVITED
BERTA WALKER GALLERY

MAY 22 - JUNE 14

Opening Reception Friday, May 22, 6 - 8 PM

SELINA TRIEFF (1934 - 2015)

"A Celebration of Life Through Color"

Memorial Exhibition of paintings & drawings

HANS HOFMANN (1880-1966)

"Made in Provincetown"

drawings and watercolors

BLANCHE LAZZELL (1878-1956)

"2015: Lazzell's Centennial in Provincetown"

white line prints and mixed media works on paper

plus students of Hofmann affiliated with Berta Walker Gallery

ROBERT HENRY, BRENDA HOROWITZ, PENELOPE JENCKS, PAUL RESIKA

Launching the Berta Walker Gallery's 26th season is a dynamite trio, all interconnected as a vital part of the history of American Art as created in Provincetown: **SELINA TRIEFF, HANS HOFMANN, BLANCHE LAZZELL**. This exhibition takes on a note of synchronistic magic: Trieff and Lazzell, important American female artists, early on had the courage to follow their artistic paths, independent of the accepted art of the moment. This search led them both, at opposite times in their artistic careers, to study with Hofmann in Provincetown, Trieff as a young art student, Lazzell in her later years, and through this historic art colony, go on to international fame as important American artists unique in their forms of expression. Both artists work reflect, independently, concepts learned from Hans Hofmann, one of the most important figures in the history of postwar American art. Coincidentally, on June 14, a major panel will take place in Provincetown on Hofmann, presented by the Hofmann Trust at the Hawthorne Barn in Provincetown where Hofmann taught for over 20 years. Both Penelope Jencks and Paul Resika will be panelists. This BWG major exhibition will also include a group show of four BWG artists, along with Trieff and Lazzell, who also studied with Hofmann: **ROBERT HENRY, BRENDA HOROWITZ, PENELOPE JENCKS AND PAUL RESIKA**.



Selina Trieff & Berta Walker's TWIN, Louise Walker Davy

SELINA TRIEFF (1934 - 2015)

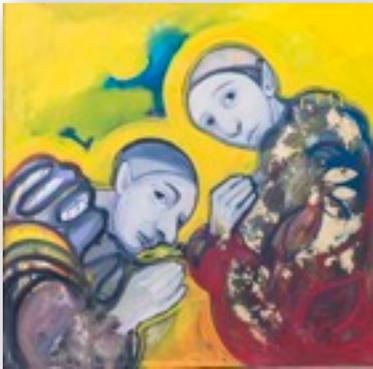
"A Celebration of Life Through Color" Memorial Exhibition

"Selina Trieff...was a hauntingly good painter," wrote David Brody recently for "artcritical.com".

"Each composition is a carefully calibrated balance between color surprise, dramatic stagecraft, and strong, intelligent draftsmanship." From Hofmann, Trieff learned about the physicality of paint and how to ask pictorial questions without pat answers. Stubbornly, mutinously, she found her footing in the still-hot coals of expressionist gesture, which she trained back on figuration.... One could say that Trieff's unique contribution was to put the aniconism of Modernist abstraction back onto a more ritualistic footing — in effect by making private icons. Achieving the magical, eternal feeling given off by one painting after another required all of Trieff's expertise and finesse. It was her own considerable skill, of course, that was the real object of her conjurings."

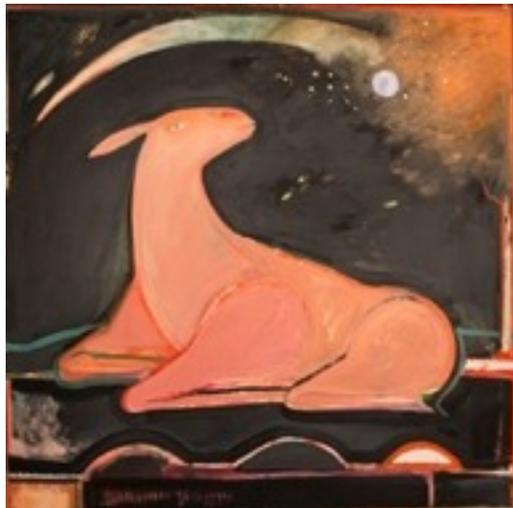


The Rehearsal, 1985., O/C, 72 x 60"



Clown & Artist, 1985, O/C, 30 x 30"

Trieff's message remains remarkably consistent, remarkably timeless. Aldous Huxley described this response as a "perennial philosophy," the timeless wisdom that has been rediscovered again and again through the ages. "Her paint is totally captivating. It is tactile and emotional, often igniting a physical response in me", wrote Berta Walker for an article in Provincetown Arts, 2012. "Her myriad colors, textures, and materials, are used unexpectedly and effectively. We are enveloped by the lushness of paint Trieff uses to express the illusive yet familiar landscape in which these people and animals reside."



With A Purple Moon, 1989, O/C, 60 x 60"

At any point, in connecting to a glance in the eye of one of Selina's animals or people, we are encouraged in that moment to imagine, feel, question, contemplate. These pilgrims, dancers, goats, birds, sheepdogs seem to stir the universal questions of life: Who am I? Who are we? What is our place on earth? Aren't we all connected? Most of the figures are represented in twos and threes, revealing perhaps our own masks: Do I feel sad or mystified in this moment? Which mask am I wearing right now? The figures themselves, at first glance, may appear androgynous; at another time, one of these figures might seem to be male or female. They somehow reflect the duality of gender in each one of us. "I believe that Selina's paintings actually embody a "spirit of guidance" with which the viewer connects. And that guidance changes from viewing to viewing, from day to day. Selina's

paintings offer me access to my inner truth in a continuously new way—mirrored, somehow, by these beings of light and wisdom. Selina's art is crafted by a great and unique talent, a most amazing artist and person." (BW, Provincetown Arts)

**A Celebration of Selina's life is being held
Sunday, May 31, 2 - 4 PM
Provincetown Art Association and Museum
RSVP: www.eventbrite.com
Memorials may be made in Selina's name to PAAM**



Installation View, 2014, BWG, w/ Dan & Judyth Katz



Chicken, 2007, 24 x 18"

HANS HOFMANN (1880-1966)

"The Provincetown Years"
pencil, ink and watercolors

In 1933, Hofmann opened his first school in New York City, followed by a second in Provincetown the next year. Hofmann's reputation for innovation and exuberant optimism was widespread. Hofmann is one of the most important figures in the history of postwar American art, changing the face of American art right here in Provincetown, where he spent his summers as teacher and painter from 1935 until his death in 1966.

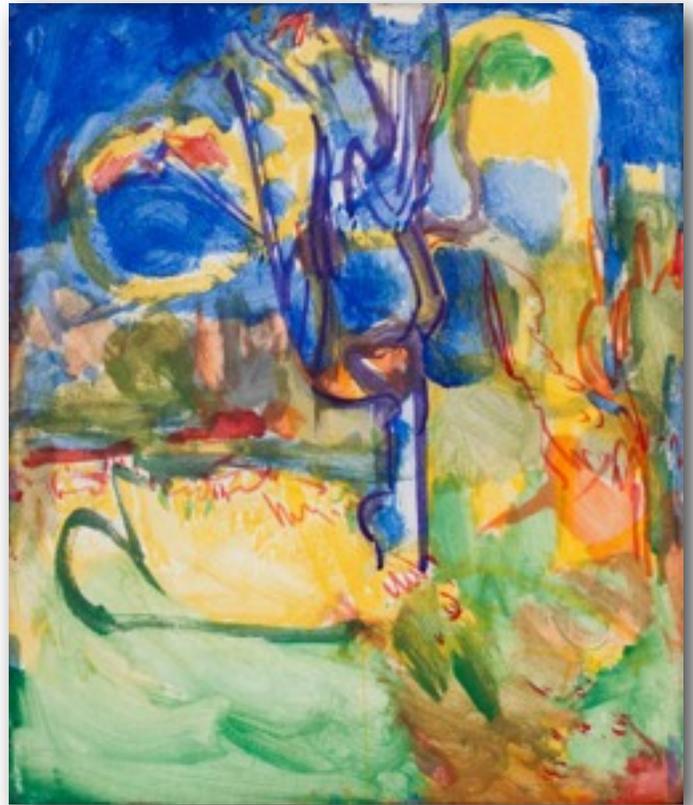
Hofmann had a great impact on each and every student with whom he worked. He'd tear their work in half or draw directly on their drawings to make an artistic point. His students followed him around the room as he did his bi-weekly criticisms of each student -- always with a kindness and understanding. In her extensive article published in the exhibition catalog of *"The Tides of Provincetown"* New Britain Museum travelling exhibition, Deborah Forman talks about Hofmann's students. "The work of Hofmann's students is varied. It is clear that his aim was not to teach a specific way of painting or drawing; rather, by exposing his students to certain fundamentals, he hoped they would come into their own individual style. His approach required balancing freedom with self-discipline."

Selina Trieff and Robert Henry studied with Hofmann in the early 50's in Provincetown. Robert Henry told Forman: "Hofmann taught a structure in a way that promoted whatever his students wanted to do." Trieff added "He loved his students." And, added Henry, "He loved art. Financial success was not the goal. It was truly all about art." As a teenager, Resika studied with Hofmann in New York, and later came to Provincetown to help paint Hofmann's studio for him. "In both color and structure, writes Forman, you can see Hofmann's influence; but like so many of his students, Resika took an approach distinctly his own. Resika posits: "Does it matter what you paint? Piers and boats are forms you can do something with...you do what you can do to find the form." In a recent interview with Brenda Horowitz for the Provincetown Banner, Susan Rand Brown observed: "It's the Hofmann School that still sets her (Horowitz's) compass." Horowitz said to Brown: "Once you study with Hofmann, everything else seems like nothing...What he taught was-- she pauses -- "metaphysics. He made painting come alive."

As noted, Hofmann frequently worked directly on students' art to make his point. Recently, in looking at Penelope Jencks early Hofmann student drawings, Walker notes: "I was fascinated by the way Hofmann converted Jencks' smaller figure on the page to the figure becoming the entire page; it struck me that her huge sculptured figures for which she is known today, were perhaps "born" in that drawing class."

This exhibition will include a selection of ink drawings, plus three very unique mixed media pieces. Whether painting still life's in his converted barn studio, or painting *en plein air* in the surrounding dunes, Hofmann's ecstatic gaze spontaneously encompassed everything around him. These small works reveal the magnitude of his vision, his ability, as Frank Stella has written, "to fuse the action of painting and drawing into a single, immediate gesture...".

Berta Walker Gallery is pleased to have connected to the Hofmann Foundation over twenty years ago through Emily Farnham's book on Hofmann students, resulting in Hofmann's return for a major show at PAAM and Berta Walker Gallery, where Walker presented Hofmann's then unknown Provincetown drawings and paintings.



Hans Hofmann, *Untitled #5*, c. 1936, mixed media on board, 23 3/4 x 20"



Hans Hofmann, *Self Portrait*, c. 1935, India ink on paper, 11 x 8 1/2"

BLANCHE LAZZELL (1878-1956)

"2015: Lazzell's Centennial in Provincetown"
white line prints and mixed media works on paper

One hundred years ago, Blanche Lazzell first came to Provincetown, in 1915, to study with Charles Hawthorne. She was a remarkable artist: independent, curious, courageous, experimental. She was neither timid nor sentimental. She was one of the first women to create abstract paintings in America -- in fact many say, THE FIRST! As Roberta Smith observed in *The New York Times*, "Lazzell (has been) a perennially overlooked American modernist."



Untitled (Abstraction), 1924,
gouache, 9 1/2 x 8 1/2"

In Provincetown, Lazzell immediately felt "in her element" (Archives of American Art), enthusiastically writing about meeting many of her friends with whom she'd painted in Europe. Oliver Chaffee taught this extraordinary abstract painter and pioneer modernist how to make the single-block woodcut in color which became known as The Provincetown Print, as a uniquely American art form originated by B. J. O. Nordfeldt. Later, she taught this method to Agnes Weinrich.

In 1923, at 45, Lazzell returned to Europe, and developed close associations with artists who were interested in Cubism and abstraction. Here, like Chaffee, Lazzell became interested in compositions based on the "golden section", the ancient mathematical formula for calculating proportional perfection. Her work was exhibited in the

Salon d'Automne in the fall of 1923 and thereafter, and received favorable press notices. She explained her theory of the abstract in a letter to her sister: "The abstract as we consider it in painting today, is an organization of color, whether the color is expressed planes, or in forms, or in volume - isn't music the organization of sound?"



Peace, Love, Joy, 1930, woodcut,
5 x 3 3/4"

At 55, in 1935, Blanche Lazzell joined the classes of Hans Hofmann. She was always curious and never feared learning something radically different from what she was already creating. Blanche Lazzell is a major force in American Art, overlooked, perhaps, during her important career because she was a woman, but now, is being seen for the great strength of originality and talent she had. In this exhibition at BWG, we have juxtaposed Lazzell and Hofmann, creating an extraordinary conversation between these two artists, as they went their separate lives in their art, only connecting toward the end of their respective careers.

For more than forty years, Blanche Lazzell was an important presence in the town of Provincetown. She was determined to become well-educated, studying literature, art history, and the fine arts at West Virginia University. And, she was uninterested in conventional married life writing home from college "I am going to be an independent maiden lady. And I will show people I can be as happy as anyone." Early on she learned from her art teacher William Leonard, who had studied in Paris, to see and feel for herself, a lesson she would always remember. She never abandoned her will to experiment.



The Blue Jug, 1928, white line
print, slr, 13 7/8 x 12 1/4"



Untitled (St. Augustine), 1944, oil on board,
13 3/4 x 11 5/8"



Berta Walker
GALLERY

208 Bradford Street Provincetown, MA 02657 (East End of Town near Howland Street, AMPLE PARKING)
508-487-6411 BertaWalker@BertaWalkerGallery.com www.BertaWalkerGallery.com (f) 508-487-8794