

Jerome Hill

BEYOND THE FRAME

Jerome Hill

BEYOND THE FRAME

September 10, 2005–January 8, 2006
James J. Hill House
Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota



CONTENTS

2	PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
	Brian Szott
5	OPENING THE DOOR: WITH JEROME HILL IN ROME AND CASSIS
	Sheila ffolliott
II	JEROME HILL AND THE ETERNAL MOMENT
	Marilyn Olson and Brian Szott
15	WORKS BY JEROME HILL
23	PRIVILEGED PERSPECTIVES: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF JEROME HILL
	George Slade
28	JEROME HILL'S ENDURING LEGACY
	Linda Hoeschler



PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Brian Szott

The one-hundredth anniversary of a notable person's birth is a customarily appropriate time to evaluate his or her accomplishments. Ideally, there are accomplishments worthy of evaluation and enough people around who knew the centenarian personally to lend that evaluation the tang of living memory. Happily, both of those conditions are met in the case of Jerome Hill.

Born James Jerome Hill in St. Paul in 1905, he was a grandson of the railroad baron for whom he was named. He grew up in a family that valued artistic expression and experimentation and could afford to surround itself with world-class art. Surely this domestic atmosphere, plus his own abundant curiosity and talents, led him to lifelong work in a range of media that included music, photography, painting, and filmmaking. Hill was a genuine Renaissance man in a culture where specific focus in a given field—be it science, business, sports, or the arts—is prized over breadth. Had he devoted himself to just one of these artistic pursuits, there's no doubt that a great many people worldwide would be observing this centennial. Just as Hill resisted specialization in life, he has, in death, defied

categorization. When examining any single aspect of his career, one must be cognizant of a wealth of others. In order to capture the essence of the man, one must look beyond any particular facet.

I have taken that set of challenges to heart in assembling this exhibition and the book that accompanies it. The title, *Jerome Hill: Beyond the Frame*, refers to two of the essential, interrelated facets of his life. The first is that the concept of framing was a unifying one in his multidisciplinary oeuvre. In every medium in which he worked, Hill was keenly aware of frames. For example, many of his paintings incorporate doors, windows, and paintings that echo the windowlike nature of his compositions. His frame-by-frame approach to filmmaking, especially in the experimental work, is well known. Finally, Hill's vision, framed through the still-camera lens, captures fragmented scenes and narratives, both actual and implied.

A second key facet of Hill's life is that he readily and habitually moved beyond the frame of his own work to support the artistic pursuits of others. Numerous personal accounts attest to his generosity, both of spirit and of means. This quality was exemplified, of course, in his establishment of the philanthropic foundation that today bears his name and is perhaps his most enduring legacy.

The aim of this book, then, is to consider Hill as an artist and as a person. Two of the four essays deal with his artistry—specifically, with his painting and photography—while the other two explore, respectively, his effect on some of the people who knew him and on some of those organizations and artists who since 1964 have been recipients of his largesse. Of course, Hill was also an able filmmaker and composer, but I thought it best to focus here on his two-dimensional work in order to gain greater clarity about his art as a whole.

It has been twenty-six years since Jerome Hill's art was last shown in St. Paul. The aim of the exhibition *Jerome Hill: Beyond the Frame*, therefore, is to introduce a new generation of Minnesotans to his work and spark an ongoing evaluation of his aesthetic achievements.

A number of people have my gratitude for helping bring this exhibition and book to life. First, I thank the members of the extended Hill family whose loyalty to Jerome and support of this project made it possible. I must especially single out family members Sheila ffolliott and George Slade for their insightful essays about the man and artist. Additional thanks go to George for the curatorial expertise he provided in selecting the photographs for the exhibition. Appreciation is due as well to Linda Hoeschler, former executive director of the American Composers Forum, St. Paul, for her essay summarizing the Jerome Foundation's impact on contemporary art in Minnesota, New York City, and nationwide over the past four decades.

I would also like to recognize the Jerome Foundation for its financial support of the exhibition—particularly foundation president Cynthia Gehrig, whose commitment to and stewardship of this project cannot be adequately measured. I can think of no one who embodies Jerome Hill's spirit and values more than she does.

Considerable gratitude also goes to the institutions and individuals loaning works to the exhibition: the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, St. John's University, Collegeville; the Jerome Foundation, St. Paul; the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; the Minnesota Museum of American Art, St. Paul; Sheila ffolliott; John and Colles Larkin; Dick and Nancy Nicholson; Charles Rydell; and George Slade.

At the Minnesota Historical Society, I would like to thank Nina Archabal, Director; Sue Fair, Craig Johnson, and Richard Stryker of the James J. Hill House; Tim Herstein, Conservation; Bob Horton, Collections; Karen Johnson, Exhibits; Rose Kubiawicz, Registrar's Office; Eric Mortenson, Photography; and Marilyn Olson, Oral History. Each of them played an important role in planning and producing the exhibition and book.

Finally, I must acknowledge editors Phil Freshman and Susan C. Jones and graphic designer Joseph D.R. O'Leary for their professionalism and expertise.



Fig. 1

OPENING THE DOOR:
WITH JEROME HILL IN ROME AND CASSIS

Sheila ffolliott

It is a Christmas day in the mid-1950s, and I am at my grandparents' Georgian house on Summit Avenue. Jerome Hill has come to St. Paul to spend the holidays with his mother, to whom he is devoted. But because she is ill and cannot entertain, he joins his aunt's party. Everyone adores Romie, with "Uncle" appended for those of us in the younger generation. His energy fills the large drawing room where we gather: he is very animated, wears a big smile, makes expressive gestures as if on stage, and keeps everybody entertained with stories of his life in New York and France. He is utterly unlike the adults I usually see because he makes movies, a world that I can only imagine. After lunch, I escape to the Steinway grand piano in the paneled game room in the basement. But Jerome must also have wanted to steal away, because he soon appears, sits down next to me, and proposes that I improvise while he provides accompaniment. He isn't like my ballet or piano teachers, who demand accuracy; rather, he makes me feel as though I have something creative to contribute, and he takes the supporting role.

Uncle Romie visited St. Paul at other times of the year, too, and his unconventional behavior always intrigued me. Sporting vintage corduroy trousers and a well-worn tweed jacket, he drove around town in his mother's khaki-colored 1940s roadster while everyone else had cars with fins. I remember one time when, at his suggestion, the two of us played a spontaneous game of *Parcheesi al fresco*, using my grandmother's formal garden as a giant game board.

Given my fascination with Jerome and his interest in me, I hoped that, when I left St. Paul in 1963 to attend

college in New York, I'd have the opportunity to see him more frequently. While I did sometimes see him in the city—visiting Noel Productions, his combination film studio/office, and enjoying eclectic group dinners at Sheila Chang's restaurant—the Jerome I connected with was not the experimental filmmaker and participant in the Warhol-era New York scene whom others knew. It wasn't until I moved to Rome in the late 1960s that our relationship evolved into a genuine friendship.

Jerome Hill's life followed an annual cycle. He lived in New York, where he concentrated on filmmaking, from autumn to spring, and spent summer through early autumn at his house in Cassis, near Marseille, where he devoted himself to painting. In August, he might escape the vacationing hordes by going to Sugar Bowl, a ski resort in northern California, where he also had a house; here he concentrated on composing music. In late May, en route to Cassis, he would briefly visit Rome, where he had studied—at the British Academy of Painting—in 1927–28, after graduating from Yale. As a student there, he had made a film, *The Magic Umbrella*, which featured his friends wandering underneath the arches of the ancient Roman aqueducts; clips from it appear in his autobiographical *Film Portrait* (1972). For Jerome, the eternal city didn't figure as the designated site for any specific artistic endeavor. Rome's mixture of old and new, its patina of the accreted experiences of artists and writers, and the buzz of the contemporary cinematic scene recharged his batteries.

Jerome had a regular Roman hotel, the Eden, located near the Villa Borghese and chosen so that he could hear the nightingales sing. Between visits, he left a suitcase there, filled with guidebooks and art supplies. This collection, combined with his informal attire, inspired the hotel staff to call him *Professore Hill*, an appellation that amused and flattered him—and that he never corrected.

Like Jerome, I, too, lived in Rome after graduating from college—initially to study voice but later to pursue a graduate degree in art history. He and I overlapped there on several occasions during the late 1960s and early 1970s, when I was in my mid-twenties and he in his mid-sixties. Despite the age difference, I never really thought of him as a member of my parents' generation. Apparently, I attained whatever standard Jerome set for his younger relatives'

seriousness of purpose, because he often asked me to join him on sightseeing and sketching jaunts. He also introduced me to his Roman friends, among them Marina Chaliapin, whom he had met in Paris after the war. She was the youngest child of the great Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin but lived in Rome because her Italian husband, Luigi Freddi, had been involved in establishing his country's film industry at Cinecittà, just outside Rome, during the late 1930s. Also in Jerome's Roman circle were the American expatriates John and Virginia Campbell Becker. Through them we came to know the American writer Eugene Walter, a Fellini associate and cook extraordinaire.

I well remember an occasion when Jerome tested my skills as a nascent art historian. It occurred at the church of San Luigi dei Francesi, near the Piazza Navona. Like many Italian churches, this one abounds with artistic treasures; the primary destination for most visitors is the small chapel containing Caravaggio's paintings illustrating episodes from the life of St. Matthew, his first works for public display to demonstrate his radical use of chiaroscuro and realism. As Jerome and I walked in, and our eyes adjusted to the dim light, he wondered aloud who had painted the main altarpiece we saw in the distance. Summoning all the authority of one who had just begun graduate study, I responded that it depicted the Assumption and was the work of Jacopo Bassano, a second-string sixteenth-century Venetian. Jerome challenged me—perhaps a typical reaction given the kind of competitive spirit that came of having grown up as one of four children, close in age.

I was correct, as it turned out. As a result of this exchange, Jerome seemed to accept me as a kind of peer, although he never relinquished his more characteristic mentoring role, which he unquestionably relished—as did I. Only much later did I learn from Julia Knowlton, one of his assistants in the New York office, that he acknowledged my influence in his eventual appreciation of the Baroque style so prevalent in Rome.

Sometimes during our Roman excursions Jerome would sketch or work in watercolor, while I observed the passing scene or explored a nearby church. He sat on ancient temple steps in the Forum, fully conscious of how his position echoed those of countless earlier artists who had rendered their impressions of the ancient city (fig. 1). Some

of Jerome's Roman paintings are very much in the tradition of the Roman *veduta*, or topographical townscape view. For example, in his final, unfinished Roman watercolor, he depicted the facade of the seventeenth-century church of Santi Martina e Luca—associated with the Academy of Painters—which is tucked into a corner of the Forum, adjacent to the ancient Arch of Septimius Severus. But he included as well some rather clunky small Fiats. In other Roman works, he captured familiar sites from unfamiliar angles. His highly original view of the Capitoline Hill from high atop an obscure staircase between the Palazzo dei Conservatori and the Palazzo Senatorio typifies this approach.

One of Jerome's favorite guidebooks was Augustus Hare's classic, *Walks in Rome* (1871), purchased during his postgraduate Roman sojourn when he was in his early twenties. Perhaps he felt a kinship with its author, an unmarried Englishman of his grandfather's generation who, like Jerome, was devoted to his mother, known as a raconteur, collected books and pictures, and both sought and was sought after by society. What distinguished Hare's guide to Rome from others of its genre was the author's inclusion of numerous literary quotations and anecdotes.

Jerome invented a game for us to play during our times together in Rome: he would pore over Hare, find something unfamiliar and not mentioned in other guidebooks, and then propose that we go see if it still existed. One day, our destination was a convent comprising adjoining cloisters with gardens, one Romanesque and the other, Quattrocento. Hare led us to expect some rare architectural features—for example, octagonal columns—still in their pristine state. We arrived at the site in Trastevere, bordering the Piazza San Cosimato. After overcoming the kind of difficulty that often impedes attempted visits to private sites, we were able to view the cloisters. But we found the tables turned, as we became the sights for the rather bewildered inmates of the hospital that the nunnery had become.

The endpapers of Jerome's copy of the Hare guidebook reveal his great sense of humor. Here he wrote a couplet entitled "A Lament upon the Present State of the Tiber," dating from his visit to Rome in 1927. In 1959 he incorporated it into a self-consciously bombastic sonnet

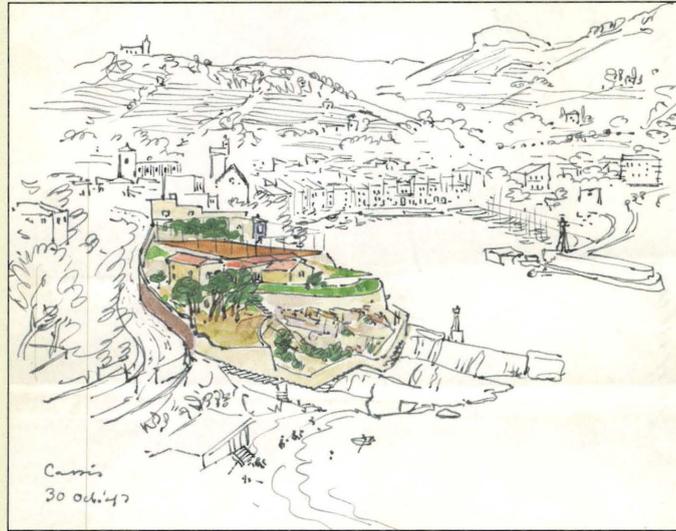


Fig. 2

(e.g., “mud” rhyming with “flood”), no doubt inspired by those Hare loved to quote. This one deplored the construction of walls along the new Tiber embankments because they obscured the reflections of the city’s noble buildings. The endpapers also contain a quatrain, written the same year, which demonstrates Jerome’s fine sense of the ridiculous. It concerns Rome’s Protestant Cemetery, which contains funerary monuments to many notables, including the English Romantic poets John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley. His witty doggerel is a mock epitaph to the man whose tomb is adjacent to Shelley’s:

Bertie Bertie Matthew Arm
Lived a life of breathless charm,
Ended eating poisoned jelly,
Has the grave right next to Shelley.

Most visitors to the Protestant Cemetery felt awe for two of the greatest English Romantic poets, who died in their prime. Who else but Jerome would be sufficiently irreverent to commemorate this place by composing an absurd but clever ditty incorporating “breathless charm,” a phrase from Dorothy Fields’s lyrics for Jerome Kern’s popular song “The Way You Look Tonight,” about the inconsequential person buried *next to* one of the greats?

During one of Jerome’s Roman visits, as his appreciation for the Baroque increased, he suggested we hire a car for a half-day trip to Ariccia, a hill town outside

the city. In 1661 the old aristocratic Savelli family of Rome was forced to sell this fiefdom, which is now Ariccia, to Pope Alexander VII, who intended to make it the seat for his rising family, the Chigi. The pope promptly commissioned Gianlorenzo Bernini, already at work on St. Peter’s square in Rome, to design a new complex featuring a scenographically conceived town square centered on a rebuilt church.

We reached our destination on a lovely early summer afternoon, and after visiting the circular church, which is modeled on the Pantheon, we stopped at a café on the piazza. As we sipped our espresso, a man stopped at our table and asked if we were looking for an apartment. It was not uncommon in Italy for tourists to be approached by people hoping to sell something; we said no, thanked him, and thought no more of it. Fifteen minutes later, another man came to our table and said he’d heard we were looking for an apartment and that he had one to offer. Now somewhat perplexed, we again declined. At dinner that night, we asked some Roman friends if they could explain these two encounters. We laughed when they enlightened us: Ariccia, just around the corner from Cinecittà, was a favorite trysting place for film stars.

Another year, Jerome decided to venture farther afield—to Naples. He invited me and a graduate-school colleague who was an expert in ancient art to accompany him, and off we went on the train. When we assumed, given the hour, that we were approaching Naples, Jerome looked up from his reading, peered through the window,



Fig. 3

and concluded that we must be headed inland (therefore off course) because the rivers were running in the wrong direction. I was struck by his observation and conclusion. Jerome presented himself as a city-dweller, but as a child he had spent summers hiking in Glacier National Park. Despite his claim in *Film Portrait* that he didn't have the outdoors skills such a family required, in fact very little eluded him. He was correct: we had boarded the wrong car of a composite train heading to different destinations south of Rome. We got off at the next stop and caught the proper train to Naples.

My last Roman encounter with Jerome occurred in 1971, after he had begun receiving treatment for cancer. He returned to the city for a performance in the Basilica of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere of his music for harpsichord and chamber orchestra, part of a summer series of concerts in Roman churches. His friend Paul Wolfe, who had studied harpsichord with Wanda Landowska, was the featured soloist, and Miles Morgan, great-grandson of the financier J. P., conducted the orchestra. Jerome was extremely pleased that his music, some of which he incorporated into the sound track of *Film Portrait*, had a public performance in the city he so loved.

In addition to our times in Rome, I paid several midsummer visits to Jerome at his house overlooking the Mediterranean in the picturesque French coastal village of Cassis (fig. 2). Here he devised a system that satisfied his craving for companionship yet preserved his time to work.

A domestic staff and someone from his New York office were always in residence, sparing him the burden of being a full-time host. To accommodate his and others' need for space, Jerome's property contained a complex of separate buildings and terraces that overlooked the harbor. Jerome lived in the main house, called La Batterie; it contained a large combination living/dining room, a kitchen, quarters for the housekeepers, and two bedrooms upstairs. He kept his painting materials in an old military bunker, facing the water, which he had incorporated into the house. A separate multistory guesthouse, called Pierrefroide, contained several flats, most with balconies facing the harbor. There was also a swimming pool and a Greek theater, sited to provide spectators with the striking vista of Cap Canaille in the distance.

Communal meals provided ample opportunity for conversation. Jerome did not invite all guests to all meals, however, but thoughtfully provided an extra kitchen for those on their own. To lighten the workload of his staff, he lunched at the nearby Hotel Les Roches Blanches, where he read aloud any letters he had received that day to the assembled company, thereby extending his vast circle of friends.

There was a tacit understanding that everyone present was involved in some sort of creative work—filmmaking, music, photography, or writing—or in an intellectual endeavor, such as purposeful reading. Staying there, in fact, could be as intense as being at an artists' colony. Not surprisingly, many of the paintings Jerome

made in Cassis record his guests at work, frequently outdoors, unless they were musicians, who took advantage of the white grand piano—originally in the music room at his grandparents' house on Summit Avenue—in the central room of the main house. Jerome encouraged one of his nieces, Susannah Schroll, a virtuoso violinist, to play some of the parts in his own compositions.

During my first visit to Cassis, Jerome painted a double portrait of my sister Terry and me sitting on the terrace (fig. 3). As was his practice, he made no preliminary drawings but simply set up his easel and worked directly on the canvas. In the course of this brief visit—only a week or so—Terry and I probably had only a couple of sittings; we were amazed by Jerome's skill at capturing our likenesses in such a short time. Had he chosen to be a professional portraitist, I have no doubt he would have achieved great success.

One July, Jerome planned an outing to escape the Bastille Day crowds that would inundate the beach directly below his house. We packed ourselves into two cars and headed inland to Moustiers-Ste. Marie, a dramatically situated medieval town in the mountains of Haut Provence. What I remember most vividly about this trip was an unscheduled stop along a country road where we found ourselves surrounded by fragrant fields of lavender in bloom, a purple carpet extending as far as the eye could see. Everyone jumped out to experience this sensory overload. Some started scanning the fields, seeking the ideal angle for photographs. At the time, I was using my mother's 1930s Leica, loaded with black-and-white film, and thus couldn't take advantage of the vibrant color. Instead, I photographed the unusual curvilinear forms of the utility poles that lined the road and made impressive silhouettes against the sky. I had never considered myself at all artistic, but there was something about being in Jerome's company that encouraged this impulse.

During my final visit to Cassis, Jerome was planning for the future of his property there. He envisioned it continuing as I had experienced it during his lifetime: a place for those artists and scholars who demonstrated a commitment to French culture to pursue their creative interests, freed from normal obligations. Because of my academic background, Jerome asked for my opinion, and

we discussed the feasibility of and potential for his dream with Russell Young, who would be the first director of the resulting center, the Camargo Foundation.

Early in 1972, I shared a pleasant dinner with Jerome and several others in his rooms at the Algonquin Hotel in New York. He had just been released from the hospital, and I was struck by his ability to make jokes about his nurses and experiences there. It was the last time I saw him. He died that November, and I attended his funeral at St. James Episcopal Church. Although it was comforting to be in the company of Jerome's friends and our family, the service, conducted by a minister who hadn't known him, was disappointingly impersonal.

After completing my Ph.D. exams in February 1973, I returned to Italy to begin work on my dissertation. I had already planned to devote my first free moments in Rome to paying a kind of memorial visit to one of the places Jerome and I had explored and considered special. I chose the rather unadorned early Christian church of Santa Sabina, on the quiet Aventine Hill. After passing some time inside, recalling things we'd done together and lamenting that there would be no more such opportunities, I walked around the neighborhood. I stopped in the Giardino degli Aranci next door to gaze upon a panorama of the city stretching out across the Tiber below—a view similar to some Jerome had painted. As I did, I contemplated the pleasant prospect of spending the next year and a half in Rome and gratefully acknowledged that Jerome Hill had opened two figurative doors for me—one, to this incomparable city and the other, to his friends, many of whom had become mine.

When I returned to my *pensione* and looked at the calendar, I was surprised and gratified to realize it was March 2, Jerome's birthday, a particularly fitting day on which to pay tribute to his generosity and influence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Ann ffolllott, Shepard Krech III, and Anne Alexander Marshall for their help with this essay.

Sheila ffolllott is a professor of art history at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. Her publications primarily concern the social context of sixteenth-century French and Italian art. She has also written on the art collection of James J. Hill, her great-grandfather.



Fig. 1

JEROME HILL AND THE ETERNAL MOMENT

Marilyn Olson and Brian Szott

Growing up in an affluent family that prized artistic expression, Jerome Hill showed the first signs of his artistic talent at an early age. “I began to paint because Dad painted,” he once remarked. “It seemed a perfectly natural thing. When I was a small boy it didn’t occur to me that there were people who didn’t paint.”¹ In 1912 and 1913, when he was just seven, he created dozens of watercolors—typically illustrating scenes from fairy tales and children’s stories—that reveal remarkable observational skills and attention to detail. At age twelve, the boy designed his own Christmas cards (a practice that was to become lifelong) and self-published a small book of poetry. One St. Paul reporter noted that “Jerome frequently illustrates his verse with watercolor sketches, which betray artistic talent.”²

Hill’s nascent artistic skills continued developing during his secondary-school years at St. Paul Academy (SPA). He produced cover art, illustrations, and cartoons for the campus magazine and, in 1921 and 1922, painted murals

on the walls of the SPA chemistry lab depicting scientific pioneers such as Archimedes and Sir Isaac Newton. (He returned four decades later, in 1964, to repair the murals and complete the series with a portrait of Albert Einstein.³) As well, young Hill was an obsessive doodler: his class notes, algebra assignments, and essay-composition books were crammed with a profusion of caricatures, portraits, fashion studies, and even architectural drawings and house plans.⁴ He showed the more serious side of his art-making ambitions by submitting drawings and paintings to competitions at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. In 1924 one of his charcoal sketches won first prize (\$35) in the drawings and prints division of the museum’s annual exhibition of work by local artists.

Hill’s education continued at Yale University, where he drew caricatures and cartoons for the *Yale Record*, the school’s newspaper, and made sets and costumes for the campus drama club, the Dramat. Although he had a passion for painting, he also felt strongly about—and majored in—music. He did so in part because, as he later said, Yale at that time “had a very good music school and not a very good art school.”⁵ Graduating in 1927, he went on to study art formally for a year at the British Academy of Painting in Rome, following that with three years at the Académie Scandinave in the Montparnesse district of Paris. Between the world wars, the French capital was dominated by a variety of modernist styles that were loosely known as the School of Paris. Artists from both Europe and America converged on the city to absorb this ambience and experiment with the expressive potential of these styles.

Several important painters, including Charles Dufresne, Othon Friesz, and Marcel Gromaire, were among Hill’s instructors there. Their modernist styles, and their support, had lasting impact on him. But Hill was also influenced by the great painters who were then working in France. Sketches from this time reveal his attempts to capture the stylistic essences of Georges Braque, Raoul Dufy, Henri Matisse, and Amedeo Modigliani—each image drawn in the manner of the given artist.

Hill received a modest amount of recognition for his work during this period. In Paris, his paintings were included in the Salon d’Automne and Salons des Tuilleries exhibitions between 1929 and 1937, and he was given a solo

1. Jerome Hill at his easel in Cassis, circa 1965.

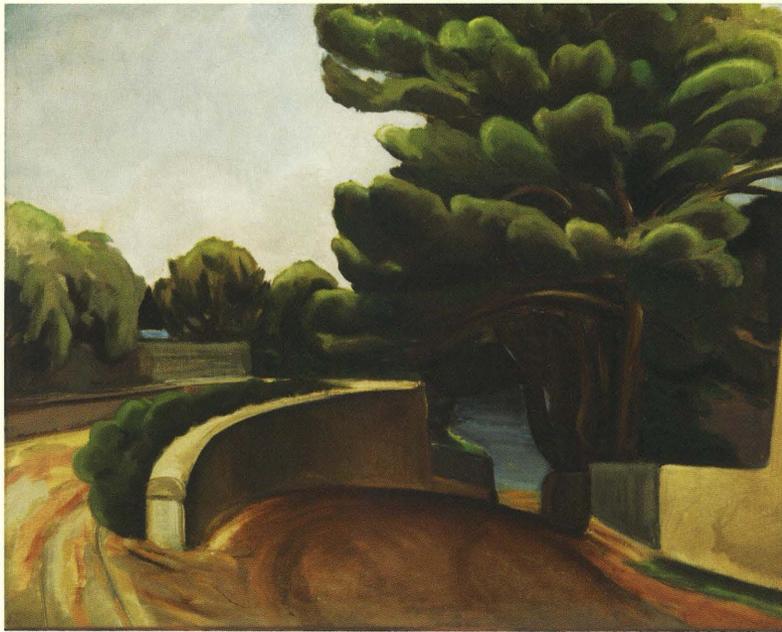


Fig. 2

show at the Galleries Paquereau in 1938. In Philadelphia, he had paintings in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts annual exhibitions of 1931 and 1934. His work of the late 1920s and 1930s reflects skilled draftsmanship with accurate detailing. Although his palette in these paintings is generally subdued, the works nonetheless hint at an emerging confidence in the use of color that would mark his mature efforts of the 1960s (fig. 2).

As vital an influence on Hill as his art instructors and the modernists was the light-saturated terrain of the South of France. He began summering in Cassis, a village located between Marseille and Toulon on the Mediterranean coast, in 1931 and in 1939 purchased a property there called La Batterie. During World War II, Hill served in U.S. Army film units and as a liaison officer with French forces in Oran, Algeria, and, after the Allies recaptured Paris, in that city. He spent free moments painting watercolors and sketching.

Yet with the end of the war and up through the 1950s, it was Hill's burgeoning interest in making film biographies, rather than in painting and drawing, that absorbed most of his attention. Indeed, films such as the short subject *Grandma Moses* (which was nominated for an Academy Award in 1951) and *Albert Schweitzer* (which won an Oscar for best feature-length documentary in 1957) were highly demanding projects—the latter, for example, taking

six years to complete. A notable break in this pattern came in 1950, when he was commissioned to create altarpiece paintings and design stained-glass windows for the Chapel of Our Lady of Mercy in Boca Grande, Florida.

In 1960 Hill returned to painting with renewed intensity. During the following decade he spent increasing amounts of time in his beloved Cassis, producing more than three hundred oils and countless drawings and watercolors. When a family member suggested that he should consider painting elsewhere, he replied that he felt no compelling need to paint anywhere other than at La Batterie and its environs.

Of all the painters Hill admired and studied, it was with Pierre Bonnard (1867–1947) and Édouard Vuillard (1868–1940) that he seemed to feel the strongest connection. For instance, after visiting the 1944 Salon d'Automne exhibition in Paris, Hill enthused that “Bonnard has two marvels of colors and pattern, whiter and clearer and more subtle than before.”⁶ In the 1890s Bonnard and Vuillard were key members of a small group of painters, known as Les Nabis (from the Hebrew, prophets), who reacted against the naturalism of the Impressionists and moved toward a Symbolist-inflected emphasis on flat, pure colors and subject matter that included domestic interiors, scenes of people bathing, dressing, and at table, and brilliantly sunlit landscapes. After the Nabis dissolved, in

“No matter how often [Jerome Hill] had delightedly looked at such sights and explored his sensations in a part of the world he loves, it is as if he had never seen it before. This constantly renewed freshness of vision in the face of something totally familiar is one of the conspicuous pleasures afforded by his art.

These images of reality are more than mere transcriptions of things seen.... In its widest sense, art is an extension of the personality.... Selection is a creation, and nothing is so expressive of a man as the choices, important or unimportant, that he makes. In that sense, all his paintings are to varying degrees contributions toward a self-portrait.”

— Stuart Preston, 1965

Preston (1915–2005) was a writer and art critic for the *New York Times* from 1949 to 1965.

1899, Bonnard and Vuillard explored a modified version of Impressionism that came to be called *Intimisme* for its focus on ordinary aspects of daily life. Both artists enjoyed lengthy careers and, like Hill, took a multidisciplinary approach, creating theatrical posters, stage and furniture design, printmaking, and, in Vuillard’s case, photography.

In his mature work of the 1960s, Hill embraced the formal and expressive contributions of these artists. Stylistically, his work from these years is characterized by the use of bright, pure colors applied with an open and broken brushstrokes. Competing patterns and repeated forms dominate each painting. Further, the rectilinear shape of the canvas is echoed in many of these works by the inclusion of window and doorframes as well as by paintings that hang on the walls of the rooms depicted. His subjects—typically domestic scenes and still lifes—exist in a shallow space against an essentially flat surface. Often, a wall serves as the backdrop that Hill penetrates with doors and windows that open onto another yet view; this was a compositional device Bonnard often employed.

The intense Mediterranean light of southern France, important to so many French painters, floods his scenes. But as implied, it is the paintings’ subject matter that most reflects Bonnard’s influence, in particular, on Hill. He often portrays his guests at Cassis in casual, unguarded moments, sometimes situated off center, writing a letter, reading a book, making art, or sleeping (fig. 3). His still lifes—of flowers that might have been picked that morning or fruit left on the breakfast table—range from the ordinary to the sublime. And in a departure from the French-modernist idiom of the first half of the twentieth century, his paintings occasionally verge on the experimental, toward greater abstraction and personal expression.

During this period, Hill was featured in solo shows in New York at the Carstairs Gallery in 1962 and the Babcock Galleries in 1964, 1967, 1969, and 1972. In Minnesota he had exhibitions at the St. Paul Art Center in 1965 (in which his paintings were shown alongside those by other artists that were in his personal collection) and at the University of Minnesota Gallery in 1968. His paintings were the focus of two posthumous exhibitions, the first at Berry-Hill Galleries in New York in 1976 and the second at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul in 1979.

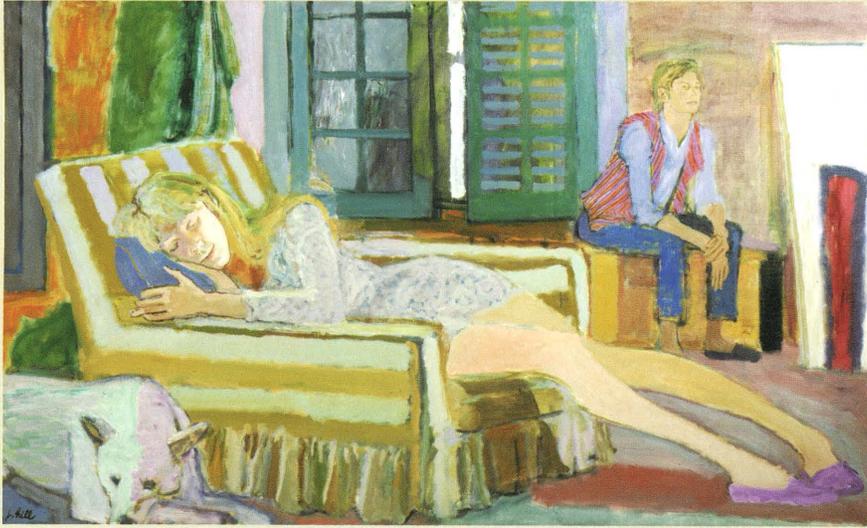


Fig. 3

Hill concluded his narration of *Film Portrait* (1972), the autobiographical film completed the year he died, with these comments: “What is this ephemeral present about which one cannot speak? Does it exist? For me, the only real valid present is the eternal moment, seized and set down once and for all. That is the creation of the artist.”

Jerome Hill pursued this eternal moment in his art. His work brilliantly captures that essential time before a flower wilts, or the fruit spoils, or the Sun shifts, or someone gets up from a chair and leaves the room. His paintings remind us to seek out the extraordinary in the everyday—to celebrate those quiet sunny afternoons with family and friends and admire the fleeting perfection of a flower.

NOTES

1. John H. Harvey, “Three Generations of Hill Family Art Collecting to Be Displayed,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, March 21, 1965.
2. “Son of Rail Chief Shows Poetic Gift,” *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, December 24, 1916.
3. The murals remain in place today.
4. Hill’s youthful sketches and other early expressions of his artistic bent are found in the Jerome Hill Papers, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.
5. Hill, quoted in Harvey, “Three Generations.”
6. Hill, letter to his family from Paris, spring 1945, Jerome Hill Papers, Manuscript Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

Marilyn Olson works in the Oral History Office at the Minnesota Historical Society. She served as research assistant for the exhibition that accompanies this book.

Brian Szott is curator of art at the Minnesota Historical Society.

WORKS BY JEROME HILL



The Terrace—with White Watering Can, 1967, oil on canvas.

Except where noted, the works reproduced here are in the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society.



Top: *Sweet Williams*, 1970, oil on canvas.

Bottom: *La Jetée-Le Soir*, 1966, oil on canvas,
Collection George Slade.



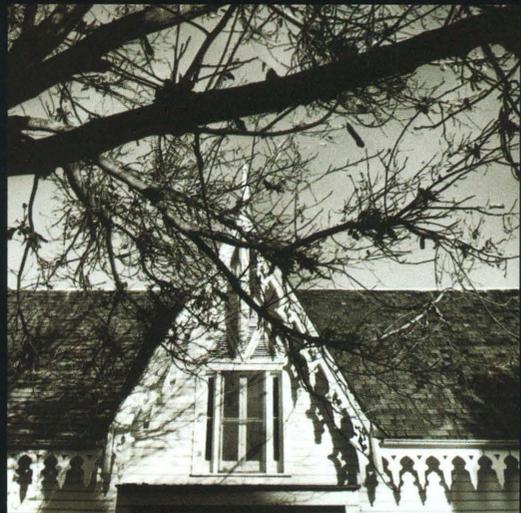
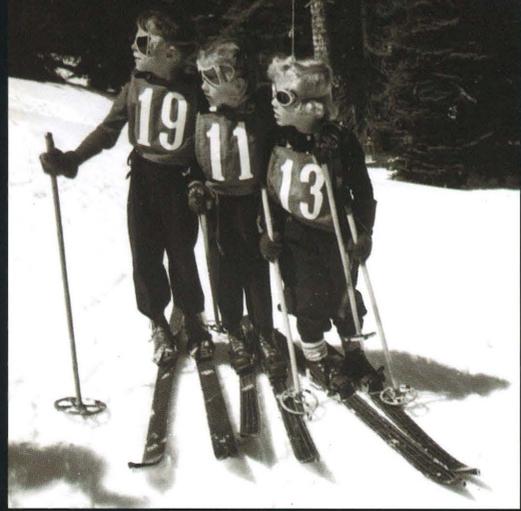
The Breakfast (The Salon, Large Version), 1967, oil on canvas,
Collection Minnesota Museum of American Art, St. Paul.



Jonas Mekas, 1967, oil on canvas, private collection.



Untitled (Jonas Mekas) (no. 11677), 1965–66, black-and-white photograph.



Clockwise from upper left:
 Untitled (June 1956) (no. 10804),
 1956, black-and-white photograph.

The Hooley Twins and Sheila (no. 7729),
 1941, black-and-white photograph.

Untitled (roof gables) (no. 7974-20),
 1941, black-and-white photograph.

Untitled (from *Trip to Greece*), 1935–36,
 black-and-white photograph.



My Desktop...(no. 11572), 1964–65, color photograph.

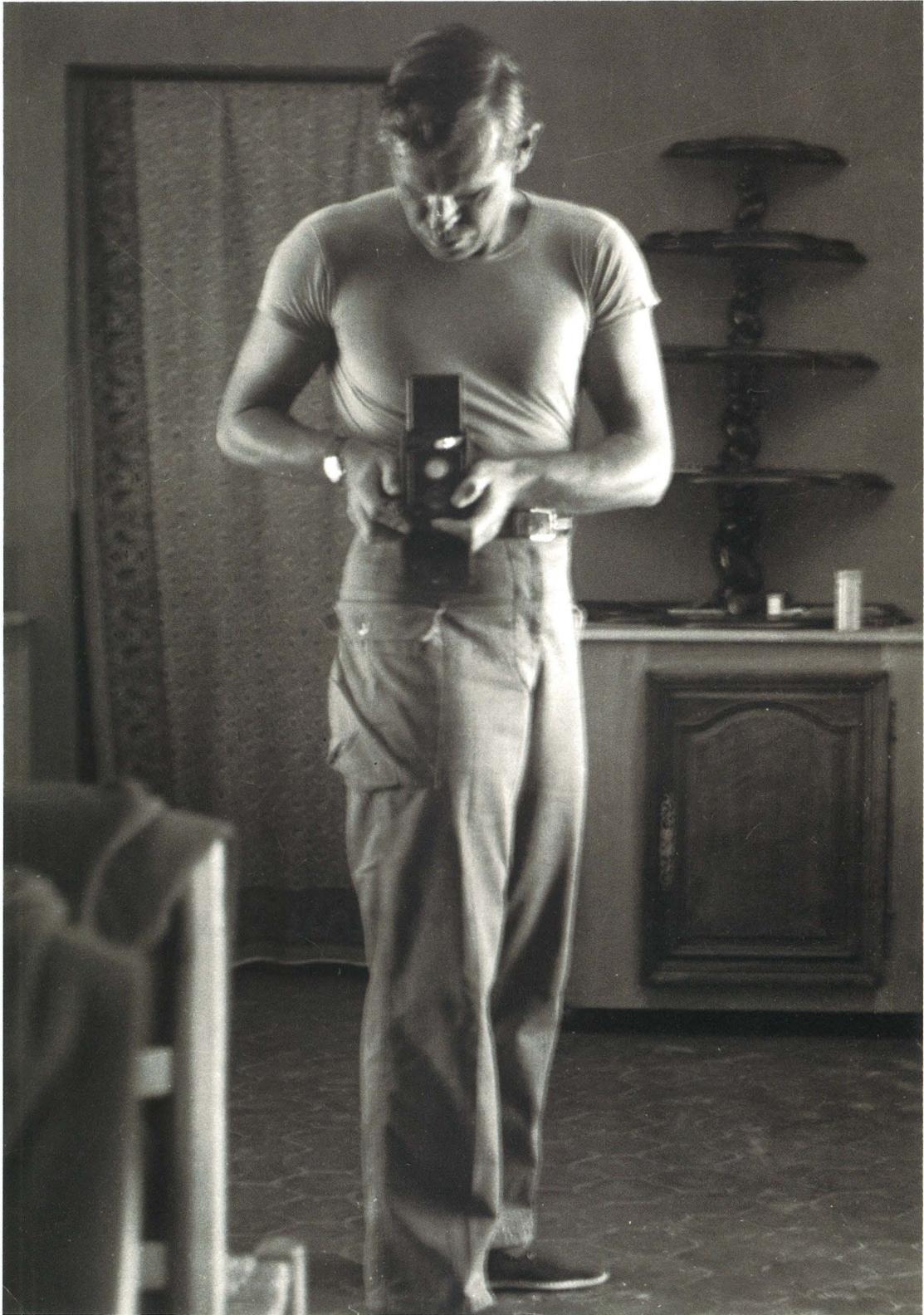


Fig. 1

PRIVILEGED PERSPECTIVES: THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF JEROME HILL

George Slade

While not always forthcoming, the opinions of an elder artist can shed useful light on another artist's character. When Jerome Hill visited the Carmel, California, studio of Edward Weston in the spring of 1931, the esteemed photographer was favorably impressed by his twenty-six-year-old client. Weston made at least fifty-five separate negatives in commissioned portrait sessions with Jerome, the largest portrait order he'd had in nearly a decade.¹ "Best of all I really approve of most of the prints ordered," Weston wrote in his journal, "and I like Jerome very much—a quite unspoiled rich boy, sensitive and intelligent."² Soon thereafter, on April 13, Hill bought—for \$15 apiece—ten prints from the photographer's "personal collection" of still lifes of vegetables and natural forms; these are now among Weston's most famous images.³ With the addition of three other purchases by Hill's mother and brother, the total represented a record for single-day sales by Weston, who reiterated his admiration for his new patron's taste ("excellent selections"), adding that Jerome "thinks for himself."

These positive interactions between an established artist and an emerging aesthete offer early evidence of Jerome Hill's generous patronage. He would later make

a number of images that reflected close attention to Weston's photography, in what might be considered a tribute to the master. More significantly, Hill's encounters with Weston signal his interest in photography as an independent art form and as a medium uniquely suited for recording impressions of one's passions, whether for individuals, found scenes, or inanimate objects. His own photographs abundantly manifest these characteristics, as the documentary components of a life devoted to a wide range of creative endeavors.

Photography also provided a stage for Jerome's multifaceted, autonomous character and his distinctive perspectives, further confirming Edward Weston's prescient observations of Jerome's intelligence and self-determination. He made photographic images of diverse subjects in the many places he called home—Cassis, New York City, Paris, California, Minnesota. The Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) holdings of Jerome's archives include more than forty bound albums containing his photographic enlargements. Typically (though not throughout), each printed image is about eight inches square and dry-mounted to a thick album page. All are numbered sequentially with an ink stamp, and many are succinctly hand-annotated with names or places; he would occasionally enter his own name as part of a group.

Compiled from the mid-1930s until nearly the end of his life in 1972, these albums represent a methodical yet indulgent approach to an artist's personal history. Jerome's character is both vivid and elusive in the albums, which are thorough and refined, carefully yet expressively edited visual histories made from a clearly privileged perspective. Although they are suffused with the passion that is at the etymological core of amateurism, they distinguish themselves from amateur travel scrapbooks on several counts—their cyclical nature, the remarkable span of time they represent, the effort entailed in making the enlargements, and the measured, thoughtful compositions present in the images themselves. There are also five unbound portfolios in the collection, altogether containing several hundred gelatin silver prints, typically about sixteen inches square and mounted on single-ply mats; these collected images are largely from negatives made in the 1930s, while the albums begin in earnest late in that

1. Jerome Hill, *Self-Portrait with Camera*, n.d., black-and-white photograph, Collection Minnesota Historical Society.

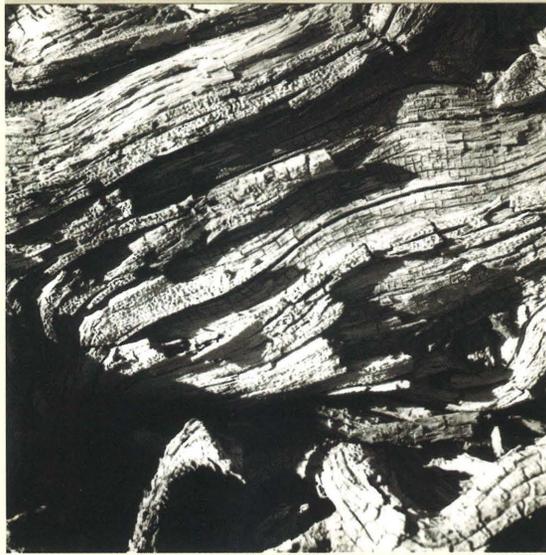


Fig. 2

decade. Taken as a whole, this material demonstrates Jerome Hill's commitment to individual photographs and to their collective impact in sequences and over time.

The albums are labeled on an MHS inventory with places and dates, and the artist's handwritten tables of contents are taped inside the front covers of many. Both the inventory and the contents lists summarize his migratory, seasonal existence: Paris, June 1939 – Cassis, August 1939; Greenwich, June 1940 – Palm Springs, 1941; Sugar Bowl, January 1941 – Reno, June 1941; St. Paul, May 1948 – Cassis, August 1948; Big Sur, 11/48 – Aix, 2/49 (this volume contains an image of driftwood, ink-stamped number 9410, which Jerome called *Hommage to Edward Weston* [fig. 2], who made his last photographs in 1948); New York, December 1966 – Bridgehampton, September 1967; Vienna, October 1967 – Sugar Bowl, August 1968; Cassis, June 1970 – Jamaica, August 1971 (the last volume, chronologically, in the collection).

The two places that appear most frequently in the albums are Cassis and Sugar Bowl. Cassis is a village between Marseille and Toulon on France's Mediterranean coast where Hill purchased property in the late 1930s; he later improved and added buildings on this favored site overlooking the lighthouse and the modest, picturesque harbor. Sugar Bowl is a ski resort near Norden, California, close to Lake Tahoe and Donner Pass, where in 1941 he built another favorite residence and where he joined the first

wave of recreational Alpine-skiing enthusiasts in the United States. The Sugar Bowl images capture the good times he shared with family and friends on the snow-covered slopes, more serene images of gatherings and interiors in the Sugar Bowl house, and the phenomenal snowfalls that would almost obscure the house and that, when molded by the wind, created surreal sculptures (fig. 3). One image shows his brother-in-law Hannes Schroll and the actress Claudette Colbert demonstrating a skiing instructor's commands; another group of photographs records a mock collision of several skiers, including Jerome, with limbs, skis, poles, and clothing wildly tangled.

Film Portrait, his final film (completed in 1972) and his most comprehensive autobiographical work, reveals that Jerome's fascination with photography emerged well before his encounter with Edward Weston. In it he describes his childhood discovery of lens-mediated images, courtesy of a tiny hole in a bedroom-window blackout shade. On sunny days he could move a translucent inner curtain back and forth to bring into focus an upside-down, reversed view of his grandfather James J. Hill's house next door. His father, Louis, encouraged his children to use mass-produced Kodak cameras. ("You Press the Button. We Do the Rest.") Louis Hill also hired professional Hollywood cameramen to shoot family movies; *Film Portrait* includes footage of his children on horseback, galloping behind a car-mounted, moving camera. The MHS albums also contain some of Jerome's



Fig. 3

earliest work, which he made in Glacier National Park when he was in his teens. In addition to snowy acrobatic stunts, a large number of these photographs show mounted riders negotiating steep trails, including unusual close-ups of the horses' lower legs and hooves carefully negotiating rough ground.

Photography enabled Jerome to record and present his singular perspectives on the world. Shortly after meeting Weston, he engaged the famed Los Angeles-based book designer Merle Armitage, Weston's collaborator on two monographs (published in 1932 and 1947), to help him produce a book.⁴ The resulting volume contains fifty-one photographs Jerome made of a 1935 sailing excursion he took with seven friends, including his brother and sister-in-law, around the Peloponnesian peninsula and among the Cycladic islands. Armitage's design, with one image on the left-hand page of each spread and oriented ninety degrees counterclockwise from the binding, suggests a sort of picture calendar with the month grids removed. The unconventional design suits the spirit of the journey and Jerome's measured yet indulgent approach to recording his life. The images in the book are an unusual mix of nautical seascape, still life, portraiture, city scenes, and detail studies—a virtual tour of his varied interests and his roaming, inclusive perspective.⁵

The history of photography can be summarized as a history of perspectives. The greatest photographic artists

are those whose perspectives, and their use of photographic tools to record them, are so distinctive that we can identify the maker through the various strands of evidence we perceive in the work. Although Jerome Hill never developed a signature style that would allow him to be recognized among the foremost practitioners of photography, it is clear that he used the medium well to present rare, inside perspectives on a life of privilege—in this case, a life devoted to creative pursuits and self-definition. Part of the challenge Jerome solved through photography and art making was that of finding perspective, taking charge of fashioning a view of the world, and setting his place in it. With photography, he could effect a magical transformation by turning a multihued, three-dimensional world into a flat, graphic scale of monochromatic tone. It was this aspect of photography, this ability to shift a viewer's sense of the physical world, which seems most salient in his work. For example, as his motion and still pictures demonstrate, Jerome had a strong interest in sand castles, structures that, after all, are exercises in scale reduction. He even created a model of his proposed Sugar Bowl house in sand, photographed it, and then "sited" a cropped print of it in a separate view of his hillside property in California.

Evidence of Jerome's use of photographic syntax abounds, in images ranging from close-ups of the wares in a Greek fishmonger's stall to textured details of driftwood and architecture, from skiers' tracks and the skittery marks made

3. Jerome Hill, *Untitled (Snow on Tree)* (no. 7679), 1941, black-and-white photograph, Collection Minnesota Historical Society.

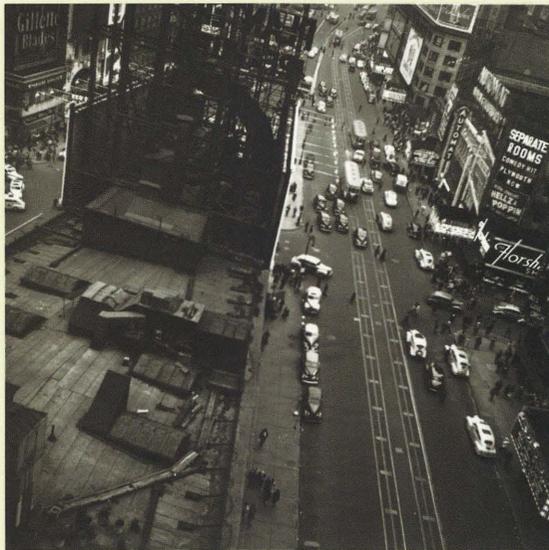


Fig. 4

by rolling clumps of snow to views of New York City from a tall building (fig. 4) to aerial views of a golf course.

Some of these images reflect the working philosophy of Group f.64, the California-based collective of photographic modernists, active in the 1930s, who were inspired by Edward Weston's clear-eyed impressions of "the thing itself." Indeed, Jerome's interactions with Weston in 1931 were an influential springboard for his lifetime in photography. He employed a nuanced sense of complex visual perception in a flexible, evocative fashion to highlight his appreciation of the world around him. His work reflects his encounters with Weston and suggests other work being done during the 1930s. Although the Great Depression, as characterized by photographers such as Dorothea Lange, does not appear in Jerome's albums, his frontal series of sunlit buildings in Carson City, Nevada, from the late 1930s recalls contemporaneous architectural photographs by Walker Evans and Berenice Abbott.

Jerome's predilection, however, was toward the human and toward explication rather than confusion. He generally included people, sometimes very small in the frame, in order to help viewers understand their own physical relationship to the scene and also to inject an element of drama. Often, too, there's a wry sense of collaboration between the photographer and his subjects, who apparently had been directed to assume specific poses. There are scores of images, sometimes including Jerome

himself, which seem to have been made during lighthearted romps; this impression of a relaxed, privileged existence, removed from the daily grind, pervades these photographic archives. Other images of people are more straightforwardly functional, for example, portraits of individuals that serve as studies for his paintings.

Like Jerome, the French photographer Jacques-Henri Lartigue (1894–1988) was born into privilege and shared with his American contemporary a buoyant, almost childlike attitude toward life's pleasures and possibilities. The photographs of both artists capture the insouciance and joy of a world without quotidian concern. The success of both Lartigue and Jerome Hill depended upon their intuitive, inherent recognition of the particulars of a rarefied existence, a recognition that they seamlessly transmuted into photographs.

Clearly, few people who are born to great wealth and social standing transform those presumed advantages into art. Jerome Hill ultimately, if somewhat self-consciously, embraced his life of privilege and determined at an early age to draw upon it as a multifaceted artist, to utilize this perspective as the foundation for a dedicated, expressive body of artwork. In addition to material resources, he was rich in curiosity, *joie de vivre*, and inventiveness. In thousands of thoughtful, illuminating photographs, he confirmed and celebrated a distinct view of his world and the people in it.

AFTERWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Several resources provide biographical perspective on the intersections between bohemian wealth, art making, and a privileged life. Foremost, perhaps, is *When We Were Three* (1998), which considers the photographic albums chronicling the travels of photographer George Platt Lynes, publisher Monroe Wheeler, and writer Glenway Wescott, with writing by James Crump and Anatole Pohorilenko. These three men were born within six years of Jerome Hill, and their collective wanderings covered very similar territory. I thank Vincent Cianni for bringing this book to my attention and for introducing me to Anatole. Also of note are nonfiction works by Calvin Tomkins (*Living Well Is the Best Revenge*, 1971, 1998) and Amanda Vaill (*Everybody Was So Young*, 1998), both of which profile Gerald and Sara Murphy, who were models for F. Scott Fitzgerald's protagonists in *Tender Is the Night*, Dick and Nicole Diver.

I would like to acknowledge: curator Brian Szott, for his graceful indulgences of a harried writer; editors Phil Freshman and Susan C. Jones for bringing greater focus to the effort; Hilary Rollwagen, for her diligent research assistance; Cindy Gehrig, Robert Byrd, Vickie Benson, and the board and fellow members of the Jerome Foundation, for their inspiring work overseeing Jerome's legacy; Peter Beard, for his articulate perspectives on important matters familial and otherwise; my parents, for bringing me into the family; and last but without whom none of this would be happening, Jerome—for his delightful images of my grandparents and so many others of his generation. Thanks, Jerome Hill, for those gifts and many more.

George Slade is a photography historian and independent curator. He also serves as artistic director of the Minnesota Center for Photography in Minneapolis and as director of the University of Minnesota/McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowships for Photographers program. His previous publications include *Minnesota in Our Time: A Photographic Portrait* (2000). Like Jerome Hill, his first cousin (twice removed), he was born in St. Paul, attended St. Paul Academy and Yale, and once lived in New York City.

NOTES

1. These negatives, plus more Weston made of other Hill family members (including Jerome's mother, brother, and a cousin), are now in the collection of the Center for Creative Photography (ccp), Tucson, Arizona. One portrait of Jerome is reproduced on the cover of Mary Ann Caws, "Jerome Hill: Living the Arts" (St. Paul: Jerome Foundation, 2005), and in Amy Conger, *Edward Weston Photographs from the Collection of the Center for Creative Photography* (Tucson: ccp, 1992); another from the series appears on the cover and inside the 2005 Camargo Foundation exhibition catalogue cited in note 3 below.
2. Nancy Newhall, ed., *The Daybooks of Edward Weston* (New York: Aperture, 1990), 2: 212. This volume contains both his California entries and earlier ones from his years in Mexico.
3. The vintage Weston prints acquired in 1931, plus others purchased later from a retrospective portfolio, constituted the major portion of the gifts Jerome Hill made to Lucien Clergue to establish a collection of photographs at the Musée Réattu, Arles, France. For further information, see *Jerome Hill et la photographie: La donation au musée Réattu d'Arles*, exh. cat. (Cassis, France: Camargo Foundation, 2005); thirty-six Weston prints are listed and illustrated in this publication.
4. Jerome Hill, *Trip to Greece* (New York: E. Weyhe, 1936). Following their collaboration on this book, Hill and Armitage corresponded occasionally until 1967. The designer at one point sought Jerome's support for a series of non-mainstream art and design publications. The two also discussed a possible book of Jerome's winter pictures with the tentative title *Nature of Snow*. When Jerome's work was retrospectively exhibited in St. Paul in 1965, Armitage proposed a survey catalogue of his painting, film, and photography. In a letter dated April 27, 1965, he wrote:

Received your telegram at the village this morning, rushed the fifteen miles to the Ranch . . . made a quick dummy of your new book, and then back to the village to send it air mail, special delivery. I hope to God it reaches you, but in any case, you know I love you 30 miles worth! Send me all the material you can on your exhibition, as I am very interested, and on fire to do that book on Jerome Hill, the versatile American. Warmly, Merle Armitage.

The letter and book dummy are in the Jerome Hill Papers at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.
5. Three of Jerome's photographs from *Trip to Greece* were reproduced in *Vogue* (U.S. edition) 87, no. 5 (March 1, 1936): 68–69, 118. The unsigned article, "Greek Letters," includes a brief description of the journey on the sailboat *Flisvos* and two letters providing alternate points of view on the excursion—one identified as "Realism" and the other as "Romanticism."

JEROME HILL'S ENDURING LEGACY

Linda Hoeschler

Many private charities in America bear the names of their deceased founders. Yet none seems to mirror and leverage its original donor's personal interests and public largesse better than the Jerome Foundation, established in 1964 in St. Paul. This influential organization bases its decisions to allocate grants upon the commitment of Jerome Hill to help artists, especially unknown and emerging ones, realize their creative potential. As a result, Hill's giving during his lifetime, coupled with the many grants awarded since his death in 1972, have had a significant impact on American art.

The effect of Hill's endowment is particularly remarkable given that the corpus is today a moderate \$80 million (from an initial gift of \$2 million). During its first forty years of existence, through April 2004, the foundation awarded nearly four thousand grants totaling \$60.5 million. The average-size grant is \$13,000. Larger grants to arts organizations are often split among several artists pursuing individual projects. But even in 2005, one hundred years after Jerome Hill's birth, a modest grant often enables an artist to bring a creative idea to fruition.

Hill was born into a family of immense wealth and considerable social stature. His grandfather James Jerome Hill was one of the chief railroad barons of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a dynamo



whose influence and power shaped and shadowed his family, community, and nation. Obviously, his namesake could have chosen a career in the family railroad or bank, or enjoyed a self-indulgent embrace of leisure and luxuries. Instead, he set himself to studying musical composition, painting, and filmmaking—and then proceeded to make art. He was reasonably skilled in the first two disciplines and quite proficient at the third. Jerome hoped that the fame of his artwork would survive him, and to a degree it has. But his exemplary support of individual artists has, in truth, become his most enduring creation.

Hill often made his financial gifts anonymously, although the St. Paul postmark on recipients' checks effectively revealed their source. Years ago, the director of an arts organization in New York told me: "Everyone in the arts knew that when they were desperate for some money to complete a project, you could go to Jerome Hill and he'd help you out. There was no one else like him."

Interestingly, when Hill formalized his giving in 1964 by establishing the Avon Foundation (Hill-family foundations were named after St. Paul streets), artists and the arts were not mentioned in the articles of incorporation. Instead, these asserted that the foundation's purpose would be "to use and distribute its income and principal exclusively

for charitable, educational, literary, religious and scientific purpose.” In 1967 Hill established on his estate in Cassis, France, the Camargo Foundation, a residential center for humanities and social science scholars and artists pursuing French-culture-related research.

Initially, Al Heckman staffed the Avon Foundation, working with Jerome and his brother, Louis. Grants went to a myriad of charitable organizations and projects, some of which barely reflected Jerome’s personal interests. The filmmaker and film historian Jonas Mekas convinced him to give not just personal money to artists but also foundation grants, an approach that soon defined the foundation. Camargo awards complemented this support, offering the dramatic Cassis facilities overlooking the Mediterranean (twelve apartments, library, atelier, and music studio), plus stipends, to artists developing creative projects. After Hill died, the Avon Foundation decided to pattern its grants more closely on Hill’s personal giving; its name was changed to the Jerome Foundation, and artists were added to the board. Because Hill was born in Minnesota but lived so many years in New York City, grants were gradually restricted to and split between the Upper Midwestern state and the East Coast metropolis.

The foundation adopted Hill’s venturesome support of experimental—as opposed to established—artists in the late 1970s. Many of these artists pushed artistic and social boundaries with their innovative, even iconoclastic forms. Some were the kinds of outsiders whom Hill also embraced: women artists, artists with alternative sexual orientations, and artists making confrontational work. He viewed artists as magicians and strongly believed they should all be able to make their own work, even if they sometimes failed in their attempts. In his last completed film, the autobiographical *Film Portrait* (1972), he expressed his faith in the value of artists: “The only real valid present is the eternal moment, seized and set down once and for all. That is the creation of the artist.... Every artist lends his own eyes to his audience.”

It is difficult if not impossible to quantify accurately the impact of Jerome Hill’s ongoing gifts to artists and to the artistic life of Minnesota and New York City. Grant statistics can be cited and quotes proffered, but these don’t begin to convey the potency of each Jerome

grant. I write as a former board member who subsequently ran a nonprofit service organization whose New York and Minnesota members flourished because of Hill’s legacy. When I toured the facilities of many New York arts organizations and met recipient artists, I listened with pride as they told me how Jerome Foundation grants were crucial to their fledgling careers. A few dollars, carefully targeted, helped stabilize many a program, fostered the creation of some exciting (and occasionally less than stellar) art, and engendered confidence in adventuresome young artists.

In summary terms, the 3,973 grants totaling about \$60.55 million that the foundation awarded during its first forty years can be divided into seven disciplines. More than 17 percent of the dollars, roughly \$10.5 million, went to Media Arts, particularly film and video, Jerome Hill’s most significant area of artistic work and personal philanthropy. The next-largest recipient category was Visual Arts; 16 percent of the whole (\$9.9 million) was allocated to emerging artists and the organizations supporting them. Strong theater communities in both New York and Minnesota received slightly more than \$9.8 million from the foundation (16 percent). Music grants, awarded to promote the creation, development, and production of new works, totaled \$7.9 million, or almost 13 percent. Receiving about the same percentage (\$7.8 million) was Multidisciplinary Art, a burgeoning category consisting of artists who combined several genres to create their works. Dance grants to emerging choreographers and their troupes totaled \$6.7 million, or 11 percent. Finally, \$5.4 million, or 9 percent of the total, went to Literature—that is, to writers who received little if any funding from other literary-support organizations.

The impact of the Media Arts grants is remarkable, given that the \$10.5 million allocated in this category would barely begin to underwrite a commercial Hollywood film. About two-thirds of the film and video money has supported New York City artists, reflecting the large number of significant independent film and video artists residing in the five boroughs. More than three hundred fifty New York production grants and more than one hundred Minnesota production grants have helped generate documentaries, dramas, animated films, and experimental works. Award-winning documentaries funded include *Born into Brothels*

“Like most artists, I am in it for the long haul. Whatever it is that makes us engage in this very serious sport of chasing inspiration and giving it tangible expression will not go away for lack of time or money.

The Jerome Foundation’s grants help give artists the boost needed, especially in the early stages, to develop work and get it to the next artistic and professional levels. My grant allowed me to make my first connections with curators and critics and take advantage of exhibition opportunities in other cities. Mr. Hill understood the importance of funding artistic exploration.

This helps to reassure artists, and to remind the culture at large that our pursuits are valuable.”

— Carolyn Swiszc, 2005

Swiszc was a 1997–98 recipient of a MCAD/Jerome Foundation Fellowship for Emerging Artists.

(2004, Academy Award) and *The Collector of Bedford Street* (2002). Film directors Spike Lee and Mira Nair received early underwriting for work that helped launch their formidable careers. Media-artist recipients generally praise the absence of editorial strictures, plus the critical timing of financial support, which they typically received when their meager funding came from family members and/or friends.

Jerome Hill was passionately committed to experimental film, so it is appropriate that the foundation has supported vital early avant-garde filmmakers, such as Stan Brakhage and Jonas Mekas, as well as innovators who create video installations and virtual environments and experiment with new technology, such as Luca Buvoli, Martha Burgess, Paul Chan, and Denise Iris. Other Media Arts beneficiaries include organizations that provide facilities for emerging creators. Minnesota artists in this and other arts disciplines have benefited from travel and study grants underwritten by several Minnesota foundations, including, of course, the Jerome Foundation.

Nearly 640 grants have been awarded to visual arts institutions, primarily for exhibition programs, with Minnesota receiving 60 percent of these funds. The Jerome Foundation has often been the exclusive outside funding source for artists with access to these invaluable venues. Jerome-underwritten commissions, residencies, fellowships, mentoring, critical review, project grants, and travel represent vital infusions to artists’ careers and creative development. For example, Minnesota photographers Jan Estep, Wing Young Huie, and Alec Soth and sculptor Chris Larson received early foundation investments that helped advance them from the local to the national arena. These and many other artists acknowledge that Jerome support enabled them to purchase materials, increase and improve their output, reconsider their art in light of objective critical feedback, garner catalogue documentation, and connect with a commercial agent and/or gallery.

Among all artists, playwrights probably face the largest challenges in terms of getting their work seen. Through 565 key Jerome theater grants, Minnesota and New York City playwrights have benefited from production and career assistance as well as mentoring by the likes of Lisa D’Amour and August Wilson. Playwright support (with about 58 percent of the total dollars directed to Minnesota)

has included training, opportunities to create and develop new work, travel, readings, fellowships, critical assessment, and full play production. In many cases, foundation funds have given immigrant playwrights and playwrights of color—for example, Jeany Park, Ka Vang, Marcus Young, and August Wilson—their first public stage, thereby accelerating both our understanding of their cultures and their integration into our society. For many recipient artists, a Jerome grant has amounted to an imprimatur, leveraging connections and encouraging serious consideration by prestigious theaters, festivals, and directors.

The foundation is also justifiably proud of its contributions to Minnesota's nationally acclaimed music community. And emerging New York City composers often cite the Jerome Foundation as their only support in that intensely competitive metropolis. Before they were widely recognized, composers such as Brent Michael Davids, Bun-Ching Lam, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Aaron Jay Kernis were Jerome-grant recipients. Consistent with its mandate to support the creation and production of new works by emerging artists, the foundation has supported commissions, travel and study opportunities, and performances for composers through programs operated by music-service and music-producing organizations. Jerome now offers mid-career grants to composers and other artists who are advancing in their chosen fields and who would benefit from additional support at this critical juncture.

The lines between artistic disciplines have blurred with the advent of new media and technological advances, and as many artists integrate multiple art forms in their creations. These intriguing developments have prompted Jerome to become one of the first foundations to adopt a multidisciplinary-funding category. To date, it has allocated 13 percent of its grants in this relatively new area, with a fifty-five/forty-five break between Minnesota and New York City. Seminal grants have leveraged major careers for bold, provocative artists such as Karen Finley, Danny Hoch, and the international Alladeen project, led by Marianne Weems.

Since the 1960s, when modern and jazz dance was centered in New York City, the Jerome Foundation has supported this art form with generous investments. The recipients are, without exception, major creators of contemporary dance, including David Dorfman, Ralph

Lemon, Bill T. Jones, Stephen Petronio, and Urban Bush Women in New York and Chris Aiken, Danny Buraczewski, Susana diPalma, and Raneé Ramaswamy in Minnesota. Grants support individual works and help sustain—over three-to-five-year periods—burgeoning companies of independent choreographers. Other funds underwrite programs developed by emerging young choreographers.

In its first four decades, the Jerome Foundation has explored many ways to encourage nascent literary talent. Because Minnesota is home to the greatest number of nonprofit publishers in the nation, the foundation is able to direct many of its literature grants to those local institutions. Support of New York City writers is, however, more challenging and has required considerable research and experimentation. Some four hundred grants have underwritten writers' workshops and festivals, readings, and writing residencies, fellowships, and publication, travel, and study opportunities.

The appreciation that thousands of grant recipients have expressed for the Jerome Foundation's largesse is indeed gratifying. And so, of course, are the personal accounts of artistic goals met and careers established. Jerome Hill's legacy to artists is both tangible—in the form of financial assistance—and abstract, in that it reflects his fervent belief in the essential role the arts play in society. Because of him, scores of artists in various disciplines have been afforded the opportunity to nurture their talents, showcase their creations, and, ultimately, contribute to their communities and beyond.

Linda Hoeschler is former executive director of the American Composers Forum, St. Paul, and serves as a trustee of organizations that include the Great Lakes Higher Education Corporation, St. John's University, United Theological Seminary, and the Northwest Area Foundation.

THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TRUSTEES (DECEMBER 15, 2004)

OFFICERS

David A. Koch, President
Brenda Child, Vice-President
Martha H. Kaemmer, Vice-President
William R. Stoeri, Vice-President
Eleanor C. Winston, Vice-President
Nina M. Archabal, Secretary
Peter Reis, Treasurer

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Abbot G. Apter
Sharon Avent
Diane Berthel
Brenda J. Child
Mark E. Davis
Ram Gada
James T. Hale
Margaret Johnson
Martha H. Kaemmer
Sylvia C. Kaplan
Jayne B. Khalifa
David A. Koch
David M. Larson
Mary Mackbee
Susan B. McCarthy
Donald C. McIlrath
Pierce A. McNally
William C. Melton
Richard Nicholson
Dale Olseth
Peter R. Reis
William R. Stoeri
Edward C. Stringer
Paul Verret
Eleanor C. Winston
Edward J. Zapp

THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Minnesota Historical Society is a nonprofit educational and cultural institution established in 1849 to preserve and share Minnesota history. The Society collects, preserves, and tells the story of Minnesota's past through museum exhibits, extensive libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs, and book publishing. The mission of the Society is to foster among people an awareness of Minnesota history and so inspire them to draw strength and perspective from the past and find purpose for the future.

JAMES J. HILL HOUSE

The James J. Hill House on St. Paul's historic Summit Avenue was constructed in 1891 for the Great Northern Railway founder James J. Hill and his family. It is now a multiple-use historic-house museum offering guided tours, educational programs, neighborhood walking tours, concerts, lectures, dramatic programs, and event-rental facilities. Its two-story, skylit art gallery originally displayed Hill's collection of French landscape painting. Today, it is used for temporary exhibitions that showcase the Minnesota Historical Society's fine art collection and explore the history of art in Minnesota. For more information, please call (651) 297-2555, or visit www.mnhs.org/hillhouse.

Published by the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.
©2005, Minnesota Historical Society.

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the support of the Jerome Foundation for the presentation of this exhibition.

Cover: Jerome Hill, *Self-Portrait in a Blue Shirt*, 1961, oil on canvas, Collection The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Gift of Francis D. Butler.

DESIGNER: Joseph D.R. O'Leary (www.VetoDesignUSA.com)
EDITORS: Phil Freshman and Susan C. Jones, Minneapolis
PRINTER: Bolger Vision Beyond Print, Minneapolis

Jerome Hill

BEYOND THE FRAME

September 10, 2005 – January 8, 2006
James J. Hill House, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota

PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are collection of Minnesota Historical Society.
Photographs are image dimensions in inches. Height precedes width.

Untitled (Horse Legs)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1920
Copy from Original Print
9 ½ x 7 ⅝

Untitled (Self Portrait)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1935
12 ⅝ x 8 ⅞

Untitled (Parlor Scene)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1935
11 ¾ x 8 ⅜

Untitled (Painters in a Field)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1935
8 ⅞ x 12 ¾

Untitled (Two Women by Window)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1935
8 ⅞ x 8 ⅞

Untitled (Two Women on Rocks)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1935
15 ⅞ x 15 ¾

Untitled (Tracks in the Snow)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1935
15 ¾ x 15 ½

Untitled (From Trip to Greece)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1935
15 ⅝ x 15 ⅝

Untitled (Religious Icon in the Snow)
Gelatin Silver Print, circa 1935
15 ¾ x 15 ¾

Trip to Greece: A Woman of Delos
Gelatin Silver Print, 1935
15 ⅝ x 15 ⅝

Untitled (Map)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1935
16 ⅞ x 15 ⅝

Shuksan Arm, Mt. Baker, (no. 7433)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1938-40
7 ¾ x 7 ¾

Untitled (Vines), (no. 7613)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1940-41
7 ¾ x 7 ¾

Times Square from 1600 Broadway, (no. 7573)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1940-41
7 ⅝ x 7 ⅝

Untitled (Roof Gables), (no. 7974-20)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1941
Copy from Original Print
7 ¾ x 7 ¾

Storefront with Truck, (no. 7974-43)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1941
Copy from Original Print
7 ¾ x 7 ¾

The Hooley Twins & Sheila, (no. 7729)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1941
7 ¾ x 7 ⅞

Untitled (Snow on Tree) (no. 7679)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1941
7 ⅝ x 7 ½

Untitled (Circus Posters), (no. 7433)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1941
8 ¼ x 8

The Hudsons' House, Monterey, (no. 7851)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1941
8 ⅞ x 8

Hommage to Edward Weston, (no. 9410)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1948-49
8 x 8

Untitled (Two Women & Binoculars),
(no. 10765)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1956
7 ⅝ x 7 ⅝

Untitled (March 1956), (no. 10804)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1956
7 ⅞ x 7 ⅝

Antibes, (no. 11408)
Color Coupler Print, 1963-64
7 ¾ x 7 ¾

My Desktop..., (no. 11572)
Color Coupler Print, 1964-65
7 ⅝ x 7 ⅝

*The New Plastic Seat Cushions –
Newly Painted* (no. 11562)
Color Coupler Print, 1964-65
7 ⅝ x 7 ⅝

Untitled (Sunbathing), (no. 11614)
Color Coupler Print, 1965
7 ⅞ x 7 ⅝

Untitled (Astrid), (no. 11603)
Color Coupler Print, 1965
7 ¾ x 7 ¾

Untitled (Jonas Mekas), (no. 11677)
Gelatin Silver Print, 1965-66
7 ¾ x 7 ¾

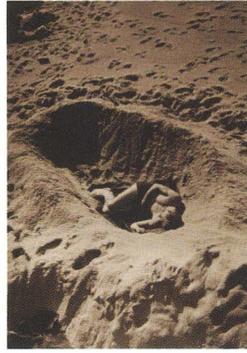
The Dying Gaul, (no. 11853)
Color Coupler Print, 1966-67
7 ⅝ x 7 ⅝

Untitled (Charles Rydell), (no. 12036)
Color Coupler Print, 1968-69
7 ⅝ x 7 ⅝

Untitled (Vines), (no. 12236)
Color Coupler Print, 1970-71
7 ¾ x 7 ¾



The Striped Skirt



Untitled (Self Portrait)



Charles Rydell

PAINTINGS

Paintings are framed dimensions in inches unless noted otherwise. Height precedes width.

Pen and Ink Sketches (four)
Pen and Ink on Paper, 1927-32
8 ½ x 5 ½ (unframed)

Antibes
Oil on Canvas, 1931
16 ½ x 9 ½
Collection Dick and Nancy Nicholson

Mediterranean – South of France
Oil on Canvas, 1934
36 ½ x 44
Collection Dick and Nancy Nicholson

Self Portrait, The Bedroom
Oil on Canvas, 1960
36 ¼ x 42 ¾
Collection Hill Museum and Manuscript
Library, St. John's University
Collegeville, Minnesota

Self Portrait in a Blue Shirt
Oil on Canvas, 1961
46 x 38
Collection Minneapolis Institute of Arts
Gift of Francis D. Butler

The Cabanon, With Yellow Couch
Oil on Canvas, 1962-63
30 x 36
Collection Charles Rydell

Mistral – A Study
Oil on Canvas, 1963
16 ½ x 21
Collection Jerome Foundation

Charles Rydell
Oil on Canvas, 1965
45 ½ x 34 ½
Collection Charles Rydell

The Striped Skirt
Oil on Canvas, 1965
86 x 60 ¼
Collection Minnesota Museum
of American Art
St. Paul, Minnesota
Gift from the McKnight Family
Endowment Fund

The Conversation (also known as *The Cabanon*
– *Interior with Peter and Astrid*)
Oil on Canvas, 1965
34 ½ x 40 ½
Collection Minnesota Museum
of American Art
St. Paul, Minnesota
Gift of the Artist

La Jetée – Le Soir
Oil on Canvas, 1966
21 x 24
Collection George Slade

The Breakfast
Oil on Canvas, 1967
45 ½ x 68
Collection Minnesota Museum
of American Art
St. Paul, Minnesota

The Terrace – With Watering Can
Oil on Canvas, 1967
31 ¼ x 44
Collection Minnesota Historical Society
Gift of General Mills, Inc.

The Quarrel (also known as *The Siesta*)
Oil on Canvas, 1968
44 x 66 ½
Collection John and Colles Larkin

A View from the Pincio, Rome
Watercolor on Paper, circa 1968
20 x 24 ¾
Private Collection

Le Grand Bonnard
Oil on Canvas, 1968-69
38 x 45
Collection Minnesota Museum
of American Art
St. Paul, Minnesota

Sweet Williams
Oil on Canvas, 1970
20 x 23
Collection Minnesota Historical Society

Samantha
Pencil on Paper, 1970
12 ½ x 17 ¼
Collection Charles Rydell

Still Life with Two Vases
Oil on Canvas, 1971
21 x 18
Collection Jerome Foundation

Grapes in a Dish
Oil on Canvas, 1972
18 x 21
Collection Minnesota Museum
of American Art
St. Paul, Minnesota

Untitled (Between the Capitoline
and the Forum, Rome)
Watercolor on Paper, 1972
15 ½ x 21
Private Collection

Untitled (Hill's Last Painting)
Oil on Canvas, 1972
18 x 15 (unframed)
Collection Charles Rydell

Pepper
Pen and Ink on Paper, n.d.
12 ½ x 17 ¼
Collection Charles Rydell