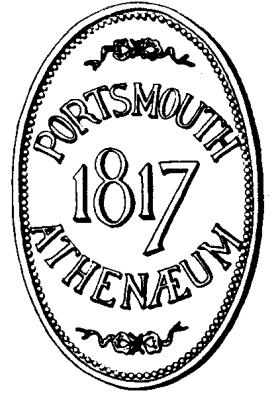


The Portsmouth Athenæum Newsletter

Summer, 2008



Artist Russell Cheney Celebrated in Exhibit

Local exhibitions of the work of artist Russell Cheney (1881–1945) are taking place this summer at both the Athenæum and Portsmouth Historical Society's Discover Portsmouth Center. The Athenæum exhibit, entitled *The Art of the Domestic: Kittery and Southern Maine*, opens June 1 in the Randall Gallery. That same afternoon, a parallel exhibit of his early work and views of Portsmouth and New Castle, *From Impressionism to Yankee Modernism*, opens at the Portsmouth Historical Society.

Russell Cheney (1881–1945) summered in Kittery, Maine, and painted there from 1927 to 1930, when he and Harvard professor F.O. Matthiessen ("Matty") settled permanently beside the Piscataqua. As one contemporary noted, "Of the little village of Kittery, Maine, he has made some of his best paintings." Here the nationally known artist, then turning 50, established a garden, orchard, and new studio where he continued to paint landscapes up and down both sides of the river until his death in 1945.

"The pictures he has made of Kittery Point and the vicinity fairly breathe the spirit of the old town," claimed reporter Horace Mitchell in 1928. "Kittery Point is the most paintable place I have ever seen," the artist responded. "I wonder why more painters do not come here? The village is still unspoiled by the summer visitor and represents a perfect goldmine of subjects."



Inside:

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Upcoming Events

June - October, 2008

Welcome and Thanks

Dozens of his Kittery pictures — still life studies with flowers, portraits of friends, workers, and the many cats he sketched and painted around his home, as critics noted, "are charming and very French in character." Indeed, many domestic interiors, filled with fruit, vegetables, flowers and objets d'art show his love of Cezanne, Van Gogh, Utrillo, Monet, and Manet "not because he was a kind of plagiarist, but because he recognized and admired what the new French art had to offer."

A visit to Cheney's studio will be part of a day-long symposium on Aug. 2, titled *Yankee Modernism in Maine*. Co-sponsored by the Kittery Art Association, the Kittery Historical Society and the Portsmouth Athenæum, the day includes lectures by Candee, Thomas A. Denenberg, Jay Grossman, Michael Culver and Donna Cassidy, as well as lunch, a tour and exhibits. Pre-registration is required; the cost is \$35.00. More information can be found online at our website www.portsmouthathenaeum.org, at www.portsmouthhistory.org, and on the Russell Cheney website: www.russellcheney.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**JUNE - OCTOBER, 2008
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**

- JUNE 1 Opening reception, "Russell Cheney – New England Master. Paintings of Northern New England 1910-1945." Part I: *From Impressionism to Yankee Modernism, Portsmouth & the New Hampshire Coast* opens at the Portsmouth Historical Society at 2:00 p.m.: www.portsmouthhistory.org. Part II: *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine* opens in the Randall Gallery, 4:00 p.m..
- JUNE 10 Abbey Burch lectures on "By His Account Rendered: The Business of Cabinetmaking in York County, Maine." Piscataqua Decorative Arts Society meeting, 5:30 p.m., Tyco Center. \$10 for non-PDAS members.
- JUNE 28 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, with a focus on new discoveries. 11:00 a.m., Randall Gallery.
- JULY 12 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, with a focus on "Cheney's Training and Early Work." 11:00 a.m., Portsmouth Historical Society. RSVP 436-8420.
- JULY 19 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, focusing on "The Art of the Domestic." 11:00 a.m., Randall Gallery.
- JULY 22 MEET THE AUTHOR! Local artist and educator Maureen E. Mills – who with husband, Steve Zoldak, have been the Potters at Strawberry Banke for the past 20 years, discusses and signs copies of her new book, *Surface Decoration for Ceramics*, just published by Lark Books. Chair of the ceramics department at the New Hampshire Institute of Art, Maureen was the 2004 recipient of the prestigious Artist Advancement Grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Piscataqua Region. 5:30 p.m., Sawtelle Reading Room.
- JULY 26 July 26 – Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, with a focus on "Depression Portsmouth: H.M.S. Harlow and Russell Cheney." 11:00 a.m., Portsmouth Historical Society. RSVP 436-8420.
- AUGUST 2 Symposium: "Yankee Modernism in Maine," co-sponsored by the Kittery Art Association, Kittery Historical Society, and the Athenæum. Includes lectures, lunch, tour and exhibits. First Church Parish Hall, Kittery Point. \$35; pre-registration required. Details: www.portsmouthathenaeum.org.
- AUGUST 5 16th Annual Athenæum Pot-luck Picnic. 5:30 p.m., Seacoast Science Center. Invitations forthcoming.
- AUGUST 9 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, focusing on "Yankee Modernism in Kittery." 11:00 a.m., Randall Gallery.
- AUGUST 16 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, with a focus on "Cheney's New Castle paintings." 11:00 a.m., Portsmouth Historical Society. RSVP 436-8420.
- AUGUST 30 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, focusing on "Russell Cheney: American and New England Master." 11:00 a.m., Randall Gallery.
- SEPT. 6 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, with a focus on "Coal Pockets and Triton, Portsmouth Waterfront." 11:00 a.m., Portsmouth Historical Society. RSVP 436-8420.

Space for Many Events is Limited; Please Call 431-2538, ext. 2, for Reservations

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE - OCTOBER, 2008
CONTINUED

- SEPT. 6 Athenæum Exhibit *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine* closes.
- SEPT. 9 "Folk Art on High: a Close Look at Early Weathervanes from Massachusetts," a talk by Julie Lindberg, in a meeting of the Piscataqua Decorative Arts Society. 5:30 p.m., Tyco Center, Strawberry Banke. \$10 for non-PDAS members.
- SEPT. 20 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, with a focus on "Painting the Seasons: Snow or No Snow." 11:00 a.m., Portsmouth Historical Society. RSVP 436-8420.
- SEPT. 21 Opening reception for an exhibition of photographs by Walter H. James of Portsmouth, continuing through Nov. 29th. Randall Gallery.
- SEPT. 28 Portsmouth Maritime Folk Festival presents cameo concert performances by various artists. 1:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m., Sawtelle Reading Room.
- OCT. 4 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, focusing on "Photography and Painting." 11:00 a.m., Portsmouth Historical Society. RSVP 436-8420.
- OCT. 25 Gallery Talk, *The Art of the Domestic, Paintings of Kittery and Southern Maine*, "Yankee Modernism and the Seacoast." 11:00 a.m., Portsmouth Historical Society. RSVP 436-8420.

CONGRATULATIONS, WELCOME & THANKS

TO THE FOLLOWING NEW
PROPRIETORS, MEMBERS, & FRIENDS

WELCOME and thanks to the following new and renewed Friends of the Athenæum:

Tyson Dines III
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Filson Glanz

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Sara Rhoades
Keith Searles

OUR THANKS to *Hollis Brodrick* for the excellent behind-the-scenes tour of his exhibit, "American Style: Russell Kettell's Pine Furniture," at the Concord Museum. Thanks also to *Dick Adams* for volunteering to drive the van for the trip. Our gratitude to *Army & Louise Dennett* for hosting a tea for new members in May. And many thanks to the editors of *New Hampshire Magazine* for choosing the Athenæum as "Best Overlooked Museum" in their "Best of NH" 2008 issue!

Generosity:

Adopt-A-Book:

Jane Porter

Arts Athenæum:

Michael Baenen
Patricia Heard
William Wieting

In Memory of Margaret Waddle:

Armistead & Louise Dennett
Karen Bowker

Special Collections:

Robert Dishman
Carol Rymes

Unrestricted:

Valerie Cunningham
Fran Mallon

FROM THE STACKS

RECENT ACCESSIONS, GIFTS & ACQUISITIONS

Gifts of Books

Al Angus: *Friends*; Elizabeth and Douglas Aykroyd: *A Treasury of Gilbert & Sullivan and Early American Silver Selected from the Mabel Brady Garvan Collection*, Yale University, by John Marshall Phillips; Michael Baenen and Peter Narbonne: *Institutions of Reading: The Social Life of Libraries in the United States, This Republic of Suffering* by Drew Gilpin Faust and *Portrait of a Patriot: the Southern Journal* by Josiah Quincy; Boston Athenæum: *Boston Athenæum Reports for 2007*; Mrs. Frank Butterworth: *Monuments of Washington's Patriotism*; Richard Candee: *Beacon Lights of History*, (Vol. XIII) by John Lord, including *The life of John Lord* by Alexander S. Twombly; Deborah Child: CDs of Images used in the Blunt book, Prepublication mock-up of *The Sketchbooks of John Samuel Blunt* and a color facsimile of the 1821 Blunt Sketchbook; Tom Clark: DVD of *Drop-Frame: a documentary of life in Portsmouth, NH*, presented in timelapse by Tom Clark; Lynn Crocker: *February House* by Sherill Tippins; Robert Dunn: *Thomas Hardy* by Claire Tomalin; Rose Eppard: *The Soul of a New Machine* by Tracy Kidder; Joseph W. P. Frost: *The Papers of Francis Bernard: Governor of Colonial Massachusetts, 1760-1769* ed. by Colin Nicolson; Thomas Hardiman and Anne Alie: *The letters of John Fairfield; a representative in Congress from 1835 to 1837*, *Nutter House Recipes*, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic* by Fiske Kimball, *The Murder of Mary Bean and Other Stories* by Elizabeth A. De Wolfe and *Practical Architecture, or A Sure Guide to the True Working According to the Rules of That Science* by William Halfpenny; Bill Littlefield: *New York Times Page One, 1851-2004*; Oak Knoll Books: *America's Membership Libraries* by Thomas Hardiman and others; J. Dennis Robinson: *Benjamin Penhallow Shillaber* by John Quincy Reed; Robert Silva: *The Age of American Unreason* by Susan Jacoby; Strawberry Banke: *Strawberry Banke A Seaport Museum 400 Years in the Making* by J. Dennis Robinson; Carvel Tefft: *Poems by Robert Southey* and *Of the Imitation of Jesus Christ* translated by Thomas a Kempis; Barbara and Gerald Ward: *English Silver in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Catalogue*, *Wood: Craft, Culture, History* by Harvey Green, *Wood Turning in North America Since 1930*, *Silver of the Americas, 1600-2000 : American Silver in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* by Jeannine Falino, ed. By Gerald Ward, and *American furniture: 2007* Gerald Ward, contributor; William Wieting: CDs of Portsmouth Athenæum's 13th Annual Memorial Concert Featuring Geoffrey Wieting, Organist.

ART REFERENCE BOOKS FROM THE ESTATE OF MERRILEE POSSNER:

Old English Porcelain: a Handbook for Collectors; *American Needlework: the History of Decorative Stitchery and Embroidery...*; *The Baskets of Rural America*; *Dictionary of American Art*; *Early Lighting in New England, 1620-1861*; *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Five Episodes in the Evolution of American Museums*; *American Baskets, a Folk Tradition*; *In Praise of America: American Decorative Arts, 1650-1830*; *The World of Antiques, Art, and Architecture in Victorian America*; *Portsmouth Furniture: Masterworks from the New Hampshire Seacoast*; *Expressions of a New Spirit*; *American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum*; *Five-Star Folk Art: One Hundred American Masterpieces*; *The Duke and Duchess of Windsor (2 vols.; Plain and Elegant, Rich and Common)*; *The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection*; *American Furniture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*; *Masonic Symbols in American Decorative Arts*; *Fraternally Yours: a Decade of Collecting*; *American Furniture & the British Tradition to 1830*; *American Furniture: Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Century Styles*; *George Washington's Chinaware*; *Bespangled, Painted, & Embroidered: Decorated Masonic Aprons in America*; *By Good Hands: New Hampshire Folk Art*; *Property from Kennedy Family Homes*; *Three Centuries of American Antiques*; *Connecticut Valley Furniture*; *New Hampshire Clocks and Clockmakers*; *The Care of Pictures*; *To Ornament Their Minds: Sarah Pierce's Litchfield Female Academy, 1792-1833*; *The World of John Brewster, Jr.*; *Three New England Watercolor Painters*; *Our Own Snug Fireside Images of the New England Home, 1760-1860.*

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Architectural Essay with a Story

The Athenæum recently acquired an interesting, rare architectural volume: Rev. John Haggitt's *Two Letters to a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries on the subject of Gothic Architecture: Containing a Refutation of Dr. Milner's Objections to Mr. Whittington's Historical Survey of the Ecclesiastical Edifices of France and an Inquiry into the Eastern Origin of the Gothic or Pointed Style* (Cambridge: J. Smith, 1813), purchased with the Donald Hickmott Fund, established in Donnie's memory for books on his favorite subjects of Architecture, Maritime History, and British History. The small book was selected because it relates to three essays by Rev. John Milner acquired by the Athenæum in the early 19th century: "On the Rise and Progress of the Pointed Arch" in *Essays on Gothic Architecture* (London: J. Taylor, 1802), "Gothic Architecture" in *Abraham Rees' Cyclopaedia* (1810), and "Treatise on the Ecclesiastical Architecture of England During the Middle Ages" (London: I. Taylor, 1811). In his two letters, Haggitt disputes Milner's popular nationalistic theory that the gothic pointed arch was a British architectural innovation and argues instead that it's derived from Moorish arches seen by Britons fighting in the Crusades. While neither clergyman proved to be correct, it is fascinating to note that the early Athenæum amassed quite a large library of works on gothic architecture while the style never seems to have caught on in Portsmouth.



An even more intriguing story was uncovered by our librarian, Robin Silva, when she was cataloging the book. On the flyleaf is an inscription in Haggitt's hand to "Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, with kind regards and every good wish of the author." Lady Butler and the Honourable Sarah Ponsonby were minor celebrities of the British Romantic movement. Both from prominent families in Ireland, they shocked their peers when they spurned their families' wishes and ran off together in 1778 — creating a private retreat at Plas Newydd, near Llangollen in Wales. They remodeled the house in the Gothic Revival style and it became an attraction for Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Scott, and other writers in the Romantic Movement. Thus it is significant that this little volume on the Gothic style was a presentation copy from one of the movement's leading scholars to two of its leading practitioners. The book is in the Rare Books vault and is available on reference when the library is staffed.

Recent Acquisitions

Barker, Pat, *Life Class*; Bayard, Pierre, *How to Talk About Books You Haven't Read*; Bergreen, Laurence, *Marco Polo: From Venice to Xanadu*; Berry, Joanne, *The Complete Pompeii*; Blackmon, Douglas A., *Slavery by Another Name*; Blauvelt, Martha Tomhave, *The Work of the Heart: Young Women and Emotion, 1780-1830*; Brooks, Geraldine, *People of the Book: a Novel*; Burnett, D. Graham, *Trying Leviathan: the Nineteenth-Century New York Court Case that Put the Whale on Trial...*; Cords, Sarah Statz, *The Real Story: a Guide to Nonfiction Reading Interests*; Craughwell, Thomas J., *Stealing Lincoln's Body*; Cunningham, Valerie, *Too Long in the Shadows: the Black Presence in New Hampshire*; Davis, Keith F., *The Origins of American Photography : from Daguerreotype to Dry-Plate, 1839-1885*; Dawkins, Richard, *The God Delusion*; DuBois, Brendan, *Twilight*; Faherty, Duncan, *Remodeling the Nation: the Architecture of American Identity, 1776-1858*; Favretti, Rudy J., *Jacob Weidenmann: Pioneer Landscape Architect*; Fennimore, Donald, *Silversmiths to the Nation*; Freinkel, Susan, *American Chestnut: the Life, Death, and Rebirth of a Perfect Tree*; Gomes, Peter J., *The Scandalous Gospel of Jesus: What's So Good About the Good News?*; Gordon, Lois G., *Nancy Cunard: Heiress, Muse, Political Idealist*; Griffiths, Tom, *Slicing the Silence: Voyaging to Antarctica*; Haggitt, John, *Two Letters to a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries on the Subject of Gothic Architecture*; Harrington, Anne, *The Cure Within: a History of Mind-Body Medicin*; Harris, John, *Moving Rooms*; Hazleton, Lesley, *Jezebel : the Untold Story of the Bible's Harlot Queen*; Hebert, Ernest, *Live Free or Die, The Kinship: With a New Essay, The Dogs of March and Spoonwood*; Heiss, Mary Lou, *The Story of Tea: a Cultural History and Drinking Guide*; Herrin, Judith, *Byzantium : the Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire*; Hodgson, Barbara, *Trading in Memories: Travels Through a Scavenger's Favorite Places*; Hood Museum of Art, *American Art at Dartmouth: Highlights from the Hood Museum of Art*; Jones, Judith, *The Tenth Muse: My Life in Food*; Korostovetz, Ivan I., *Pre-war Diplomacy, the Russo-Japanese Problem, Treaty Signed at Portsmouth, U.S.A., 1905*; Kriegstein, Arnold and Henry, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Ship Models from the Kriegstein Collection*; Kurzem, Mark, *The Mascot: Unraveling the Mystery of My Jewish Father's Nazi Boyhood*; Lauria, Jo, *Craft in America: Celebrating Two Centuries of Artists and Objects*; Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), *American Furniture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*; Miles, Jonathan, *The Wreck of the Medusa: the Most Famous Sea Disaster of the Nineteenth Century*; Morgan, John Hill, *An Extension of Lawrence Park's Descriptive List of the Work of Joseph Blackburn*; Morison, Samuel Eliot, *The Commerce of Boston on the Eve of the Revolution*; Nichols, David A., *A Matter of Justice: Eisenhower and the Beginning of the Civil Rights Revolution*; O'Brien, Patricia, *Harriet and Isabella*; Park, Lawrence, *Joseph Blackburn - Portrait Painter*; Parker, Matthew, *Panama Fever : The Epic History of One of the Greatest Human Achievements of All Time*; Pasley, Jeffrey L., *"The Tyranny of Printers" : Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic*; Poster, Jem, *Courting Shadows*

continued on back cover

Recent Acquisitions, cont.

Rapaport, Diane, *The Naked Quaker : True Crimes and Controversies from the Courts of Colonial New England*; Roberts, Cokie, *Ladies of Liberty : the Women Who Shaped our Nation*; Rodriguez, Deborah, *Kabul Beauty School: an American Woman Goes Behind the Veil*; Ross, Alex, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*; Sacks, Oliver W., *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*; Sandoval-Strausz, A. K., *Hotel: an American History*; Shubin, Neil, *Your Inner Fish: a Journey Into the 3.5-Billion-Year History of the Human Body*; Shulman, Seth, *The Telephone Gambit: Chasing Alexander Graham Bell's Secret*; Smith, Barry-Editor, *Questions of Taste: the Philosophy of Wine*; Smithsonian American Art Museum, *Going West!: Quilts and Community*; Spufford, Francis, *The Ends of the Earth : an Anthology of the Finest Writing on the Arctic and the Antarctic*; StoryCorps, *Listening is an Act of Love: a Celebration of American Life from the StoryCorps Project*; Stula, Nancy, *At Home and Abroad: the Transcendental Landscapes of Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813-1892)*; Taylor, Nick, *American-Made: The Enduring Legacy of the WPA: When FDR Put the Nation to Work*; Theroux, Paul, *The Elephanta Suite*; Toobin, Jeffrey, *The Nine : Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court*; Tungate, Mark, *Adland: a Global History of Advertising*; Updike, John, *Due Considerations: Essays and Criticism*; Viner, Michael, *Shattered Dreams, Broken Promises*; Wyatt, Neal, *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Nonfiction*.

Miscellany. . .

Book Sale Reminder. . . Never too early to start thinking about the annual Athenæum Book Sale coming up in October. Please consider helping out, either by donating or volunteering. We always need help in moving the books to and from the sale site and this year's event still needs a co-chairperson. Used books can be dropped off at the Sanderson's barn, or the Athenæum. Pick-ups can be arranged with Peter Narbonne (207) 748-0808. Please call Carol Lincoln, (603) 373-0366 if you're interested in helping sort books, transfer them to/from the sale, or can work the sales floor.

The Athenæum Handbook and Directory of Proprietors and Subscribers is now available in electronic format as a .pdf file. Athenæum Proprietors and Subscribers who would like an up-to-date copy can request one by email to info@portsmouthathenaeum.org or call 431-2538 to request a paper print-out.

The Portsmouth Athenæum
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www.portsmouthathenaeum.org

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