

K-1730

31 Paintings on Glass

By

REBECCA SALSURY STRAND

MUSEUM OF NEW MEXICO

Santa Fe, New Mexico

July 16 to August 17, 1934



1. Paul (loaned)
2. White Rose and Heron's Feather (loaned)
- 20 3. Reliquia—Mexico
- 20 4. Red Blue and Black
- 30 5. Mountain Lion's Tooth and Magnolia Bud
- 30 6. Victorian Still Life—Mexico
- 30 7. Recordatorio—Mexico
- 35 8. Huts and Lamb, Uruapan—Mexico
- 30 9. Toy Fruits and Black Lacquer Tray—Mexico
- 40 10. Viva Mejico!
11. Black Vase and Pink Rose—Mexico (loaned)
- 40 12. Sacred Heart—Mexico
- 175 13. Magnolia—Mexico
- 50 14. Virgin and Vase—New Mexico
15. White Rose (loaned)
- 35 16. Santo Nino de Atocha—Mexico
- 35 17. Painting for a Little Girl
- 20 18. Woman in the Night—New Mexico
- 20 19. Echo of New England—Mexico
20. Bill (loaned)
- 40 21. Milkweed Pod
- 15 22. Milkweed Pod
- 50 23. Calla Lily
- 45 24. Black Florero—Mexico
- 30 25. Geranium—New Mexico
- 35 26. Robalo Scale—Mexico
27. Shells from Alvarado (loaned)
- 40 28. Shells from Alvarado
29. Pink Rose (loaned)
30. Another Lamb (loaned)
- 15 31. No Title

Sold

PAINTINGS BY
REBECCA STRAND

These paintings on glass by Rebecca Strand are obviously the work of one who has a real feeling for this material, which, since Colonial days in New England has seldom been used for painting. There is in fact a relationship between those charming and simple mirror paintings and Rebecca Strand's work. Directness of seeing—an unaffected love of the objects painted are common to them both.

It is the fashion in much criticism of painting to talk dogmatically about form and weight—or to damn things as being merely decorative. Why the "merely." Is the design on a Grecian urn, or upon one of the Monte Alban jewels, or on a fine American hooked rug merely decorative, decorative, or what? I find in all these things a beauty, that is, a sense of something true and lovely which certainly existed in the persons (now unknown) who made them. There is much room in this world for songs as well as symphonies—for lyric as well as epic. There are few enough of both that have life and give life. This having and giving exists for me in these unpretentious and lovely paintings of Rebecca Strand. They express and evoke a direct response to objects with which she has made a true and loving contact; objects which are in a simple but real way related to her feeling and spirit. Of this spirit and feeling the simplicity and positiveness of the shapes, the cleanliness of the line, the richness and purity of the very personal color, are expressive reflections.

Paul Strand

Mexico City
December, 1933

Rebecca Strand is an example of pictorial candor. Her painting has enchantment, tenderness, kindness and drama. The pictorial idea unfolds lightly and gracefully; it is never equivocal.

The innocence of her feeling has not been touched by preconceived or sophisticated ideas, self-imposed or imposed by others. Therefore the pictorial elements of her work have the quality of being dramatically true; they become eminently the actors in the dramas she presents.

The "Painting For a Little Girl"—a white lamb and flowers; the "Sacred Heart,"—alive and red, ardent against black depths; the "Toy Fruits—Black Lacquer Tray Against Deep Blue"; the "Huts and Lamb of Uruapan"; "Santo Nino de Atocha," serious and poignant; a pallid magnolia sheltered by its leaves; a black vase and pink rose to which curtains offer themselves; all these are examples of her devoutness and the grace, loveliness and seriousness which Rebecca Strand gives to her work in an unmatched and genuine form.

Augustin Velasquez Chavez

Mexico City
December, 1933

REBECCA STRAND

The paintings of Rebecca Strand possess the rare quality of a simple and direct approach. One would not say (it is absurd to speak so of a cultivated artist) that they are naive and primitive; naivete and primitiveness do not exist except in children and in adults shut off from the confusion of the western world.

But in Rebecca Strand's work there is this other quality, simplicity and directness working in forms and feelings which may seem naive and primitive but which are in reality quite otherwise. It is as if through the confusion of life she had managed to preserve the mental habit and the eyes of a child, yet put this equipment to adult uses. She sees her world, one feels, with no second-hand conceptions coming between her vision and her execution. Directness and simplicity like this can be terrifying, but also unutterably charming and elevating.

It would be easy to speak of the medium—painting on glass, a technique resurrected from forgotten New England antique shops. But not too much should be made of the incidentals of art; rather it is the spirit that should be sought first. The medium, true, has a special beauty, being clean and definite and pure; it has too, special technical difficulties. But these paintings on glass take their way into the world, not as novelties or tours de force but as complete and pure works of art. Look past the medium and see there the admirable spiritual honesty of the conception, the simplicity too infrequent in a troubled world. That direct approach, no matter what the subject or mood, is the quality which makes Rebecca Strand's work live.

Elizabeth McCausland

Springfield, Massachusetts

December 6, 1933

At Chappell House during the last two weeks of this year the Denver Art Museum presents one of the most original and altogether individual exhibitions that have been shown for many a day.

The medium of painting on glass belongs to our American ancestors. Within its scope it is difficult, and allows for no slips between idea and execution. Exacting, it depends upon precise feeling of the hand for the textural qualities of the medium itself. To be sure, there is an architectural relationship between these paintings of Rebecca Strand's and the mirror painting of New England—certainly in medium and somewhat in subject. Here the relationship ceases, because these little pictures have a lyrical quality that belongs not to a world of simple things but rather to a world of infinite implications in which simple and direct statements are evaluated and sought after through a sophisticated attitude.

In each one of these pictures there is a strange, sometimes intense symbolism which endows familiar, often forgotten, things with a new sensuous quality. They stimulate feeling and further than that, they stimulate thought about feeling. They make us seek the reasons why an emotion seems as personal as though filled with the inexplicable poetic element as these luminous pictures themselves. We speak of these pictures as luminous; they are almost as luminous as though painted in clear dispassionate rays of light. Too, there is a delicacy of nuance, of color something like a far distant melody, in many of the pale blue, white and lightly tinted red flowers.

Rebecca Strand has traveled and has exhibited with Alfred Stieglitz in New York City and otherwise.

Donald J. Bear

Curator of Paintings
Denver Art Museum