



VICTOR
HIGGINS
IN
NEW MEXICO

11.

Christmas Cactus

oil on canvas

30" x 30"

Collection of

E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Photo Robert Nugent,

Santa Fe, New Mexico

6.75

VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO

Art Museum of South Texas
Corpus Christi, Texas
May 19 — July 1, 1984

Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas
August 15 — September 23, 1984

Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico
Santa Fe, New Mexico
October 14 — December 2, 1984

Organized by the
Art Museum of South Texas

The presentation of this exhibition is
funded by a generous grant from
SPARKMAN ENERGY CORPORATION
Additional funding is provided by
Promac Corporation, E. W. and Anna
Leise Sargent and the Corpus Christi Art
Foundation, Inc.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It was in January 1981 that I first became conscious of the paintings of Victor Higgins. By conscious I mean to imply it was the first time I had actually put the name Victor Higgins with an image of Victor Higgins. I was at the time lame-duck Director of the Boise Gallery of Art and one of my last "hoo rah's" was the presentation of the exhibition TAOS PAINTERS: THE FORMATIVE YEARS. This exhibition, from the Harrison Eiteljorg Collection and curated by Jim Ballinger of the Phoenix Art Museum brought to Boise, Idaho a collection of work by the recognized artists of the early Taos Society. They included Bert Phillips, Joseph Sharp, Ernest Blumenschein, E. Irving Couse, Oscar Berninghaus, Walter Ufer, Victor Higgins and others. Of all the works in the Collection those pieces by Victor Higgins stood out the most. Watercolors, oils, figurative and landscapes, there was no question in my mind who the most accomplished painter was. Victor Higgins' intellect and daring surpassed all those expressed in those few paintings, surpassed all those other painters of the Southwest that I had seen in Santa Fe, Taos, Denver, Phoenix, San Antonio or Great Falls. The exhibit was a smashing success.

In the summer of 1981, after leaving the Boise Gallery of Art and moving on to the Lone Star State to become Director of the Art Museum of South Texas, Corpus Christi, I had the great fortune to meet a legend of the Southwest, Mary Woodard Davis (I had been introduced to her name and some background by a mutual friend Laurel Reuter, Director of the Art Museum at the University of North Dakota in December 1980.) Mary Woodard Davis was traveling the world, it seemed as the vagabond curator of the MINATURE TEXTILES exhibition which was

scheduled to be exhibited at the Art Museum of South Texas during July and August of that year. The MINATURE TEXTILES exhibit went up, a French sewing workshop was presented and the hours of conversation between Mary and I went on. It was mid-week during her visit that I discovered during a lunch or dinner that one of her favorite painters of the Taos Society group was, like mine, Victor Higgins. This common identification and admiration of his work, triggered one of the most rewarding relationships and subsequent exhibitions that I have had the pleasure to be involved with. This "wonder woman" of Santa Fe, in her early eighties with a perennial bow on top of her head, commenced to rattle off stories about Victor Higgins, his life and his family, the locations of his important works, the list of previous exhibitions that had been presented and inside information about collectors and dealers who could possibly loan works for an exhibition should I ever be interested. Because of Mary Woodard Davis' undaunted enthusiasm for Victor Higgins and his work, I immediately decided to enlist her services as a guest curator to pursue the potential of an exhibition of his work being organized and presented by the Art Museum of South Texas. In the fall of 1981 I visited Santa Fe and met with numerous collectors, and viewed collections, heard more stories and commenced, with Mary's guidance to organize an exhibition of Victor Higgins works. And so after three years, numerous letters, occasional plane rides, generous owners and a dedicated patron the Art Museum of South Texas is able to present VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO. But this presentation is no single handed accomplishment.

My thanks to Jim Edwards, Art Museum of South Texas Curator for his contributions in joining with Mary Woodard Davis and myself in curating this exhibition. Also Sharyn Udall of Santa Fe is to be commended for her insightful catalog essay and Patricia Fugitt of Corpus Christi for the design of the catalog itself.

The Art Museum of South Texas will be sharing VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO with two other institutions and we acknowledge the interest and participation of David Turner, Associate Director, and Sandra D'Emilio, Curator of the Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe; and Dr. Martin Bush, Director, and Gary Hood, Chief Curator, of the Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas. Behind every institution are individuals who have made the loans of Higgin's paintings and watercolors possible. We extend our appreciation to William Foxly and Constance K. Mohrman of the Museum of Western Art, Denver, Colorado; Ernesto Mayans, Ernesto Mayans Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Wendell Ott and the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Roswell, New Mexico; Marlou Quintana and the Peters Corporation, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Dr. Dean Porter, Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, Indiana; and Marvin Schenck, Scottsdale Art Center, Scottsdale, Arizona.

I would like to especially thank Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters and E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent, all of Santa Fe, for the generous loan of works from their own collections.

The above mentioned individuals and institutions have all played a part in making the exhibit VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO a reality for Corpus Christi, Wichita and Santa Fe. But all of these efforts would be for naught without the generosity of financial support from Mr. Wallace Sparkman and the Sparkman Energy Corporation, Corpus Christi. We are pleased that the Sparkman Energy Corporation is playing a vital part in the arts of South Texas as exemplified by their support of this exhibition, catalog and educational programming. We are also thankful for additional funding from Promac Corporation, Corpus Christi, which continues its support of the Museum's publications. E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent, Santa Fe, generously provided support for the poster. Additional support was provided the Corpus Christi Art Foundation, Inc. Coordinated efforts of the Art Museum of South Texas staff and Board of Trustees plus all those listed above have made it possible to bring Victor Higgins to Texas. We are pleased that we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Victor Higgins' birth (June 28th) while the exhibition is in Corpus Christi and we will trust that history will join with us in acknowledging that now as in the future Victor Higgins will remain an important American artist.

Ric Collier
Director



Victor Higgins Painting Outdoors
Photographer Unknown

INTRODUCTION

The problem for the visitor is suddenly finding himself at the center of this enormous amphitheater and realizing that he is completely unprepared for its overpowering space and crystalline light. It was October and I had decided to head north to visit the Taos valley, the land in which Victor Higgins had lived and painted for 35 years. In order to take the high road to Taos I pulled the car off the main highway at Nambe and immediately entered a canopy of huge cottonwoods which lined both sides of the narrow country road. A mile's glide through hovering walls of golden leaves before a short climb back up on the desert plateau. The sky had paled to a powdery blue in the early evening. To the west crimson buttes protruding like open wounds upon the chalky tan earth and to the east the foothills of yellowing aspen and dark pine. And beyond this the ultramarine of the Sangre de Christos whose white capped peaks appeared in the fading light like an alien apparition. I was bedazzled.

The problem for the painter was how to capture this grandeur on an easel-sized canvas. Some of the best American artists had found New Mexico to be completely intimidating. Stuart Davis visited in 1923 and left after only four months when he could no longer stand this land's aloof expansiveness. In the summer of 1925, Edward Hopper stayed long enough to produce a few very tame watercolors of adobes and a church tower. Even John Sloan, who spent 30 consecutive summers in Santa Fe, could only deal with the landscape in the most picturesque way. Compared to the raw-boned energy of his early New York City "Ash Can" paintings, Sloan almost always seemed to be on vacation while painting in New Mexico. Of those artists who visited

New Mexico and did choose to paint its austere nature, it was perhaps Marsden Hartley who is the most interesting. Hartley spent part of the years 1918 and 1919 in northern New Mexico, but in its presence he was only able to depict the uninhabited vistas in vibrant, nearly formless color patches executed in pastels or heavily tinted oils. It was only when he was removed from this land, in New York in 1920 and Berlin in 1922-23 that Hartley captured the Southwest's brooding monumentality of light and form in his series "New Mexico Recollections."

Analytical by nature, Victor Higgins was a man who loved a balance of proportion fortified by rich colors. As a figure painter he was an interesting but not particularly emotionally charged artist. He looked upon his models with a calculating eye, and his models for the most part look back upon us with a dispassionate gaze. Higgins was interested most of all in depicting his friends as they appeared and left psychological probing to others.

Higgins was a first rate still life painter. In the sharp focused lyricism of oils like *Christmas Cactus* (no. 11) and *Petunias* (no. 31) Higgins offers a rebuttal to the sentiment that floral painting is a French import and essentially foreign to the experience of an American artist. He has acknowledged that in the Western rural lifestyle the garden and nearby field were a natural extension of the kitchen table and the artists' studio. In the presence of Higgins decidedly New Mexico floral painting we slowly abandon critical analysis in favor of allowing the eye to be unabashedly seduced, an act that perhaps up to now we only reserved for Matisse or Bonnard.

Victor Higgins honed his craft in the studio. The figure and still life compositions could be contemplated and measured at an arms length. The grandeur of the landscape posed a quite different and in Higgins case perhaps a more demanding challenge. This is a majestic and paradoxical landscape. The nearby Pueblo Indians and the penitentes of the Spanish villages add a good deal of romance to northern New Mexico, which in some ways reminds me of Taxco in the mountains south of Mexico City. Some claim it reminds them of northern Spain and to others Tibet or certain locations in Turkey. By all accounts it is unique and nearly everyone brings to the arid landscape some impression of places experienced elsewhere, either real or imagined.

Victor Higgins' task as a realist was to somehow capture the light and color of the place and convince us that it exists in real time and real space. He accomplished this nicely in *Spring, Taos Valley* (no. 42), a warm painting which pays respect to the reality of local light and scenery. Higgins could also render the land tempestuous as in *Storm* (no. 44), optically hallucinogenic as in the cloud-drift sky of *Taos Valley* (no. 49), or frozen in time and space as in *Taos in Winter* (no. 45). His knowledge of the landscape and its mood was broadened by the years he spent in Taos and his authentic identification with the place.

During the last 20 years of his life, he abstracted or condensed his vision. The fluid and spontaneous landscape watercolors and the "little gems," the small oil sketches done on the spot, are abbreviated and true. In these late works Higgins had mastered the formal

problems of superimposing cubist space and impressionistic color upon a constantly fluctuating land. He had arrived at the point of having developed a personal shorthand on small pieces of canvas, board or paper by which he attempted to record the elusive nature of time, space and painted light.

I had left the Taos Valley and was now heading south back towards Santa Fe. It had been nearly an hour since I had given up the private game of trying to match exact location to particular painting. The landscape had peeled me down and the long day had left me feeling a bit swamy. The fact that Victor Higgins never dated his work had bothered me, but as a concluding thought I had resigned that perhaps it was a very calculated gesture on his part. It is possible that Victor Higgins did not want us to experience his paintings as genre scenes in the normal sense, locked forever in a particular time and place; but rather, perhaps what he really wanted was to fix his beloved New Mexican landscape in an eternal living present.

Jim Edwards
Curator

CHRONOLOGY

- 1884
June 28. Born in Shelbyville, Indiana to John Tilson and Rose Ellen (Dolan) Higgins.
- 1899
Studied and later taught at The Art Institute of Chicago and Chicago's Academy of Fine Arts. Worked as mural painter, decorator.
- 1910-13
Traveled to Europe; studied in Paris at Academie de la Grande Chaumiere under René Ménard and Lucien Simon; studied with Hans von Hyeck in Munich.
- 1913
Returned to United States; saw Armory Show in Chicago.
- 1914
Sponsored by former Chicago Mayor Carter Harrison, Higgins traveled to New Mexico.
- 1915-20
Received nine prizes in Chicago and New York competitions; exhibited regularly in Chicago, occasionally in New York; divided time between Chicago and Taos.
- 1917
Elected active member of Taos Society of Artists.
- 1919
Married Sara Tudor Parsons, daughter of painter Sheldon Parsons, in New York; (Divorced 1924); Served as president of Chicago Society of Artists.
- 1921
Elected to National Academy.
- 1922
Daughter Joan born.
- 1923
Joined new organization The New Mexico Painters. Exhibited at Macbeth Gallery in New York, Corcoran Gallery in Washington and Art Institute of Chicago in group shows.
- 1924
Exhibited at Pettis Gallery, Indianapolis. *Taos Mountains* included in Venice Biennale.
- 1925
Solar Circus included in Carnegie International Exhibition, Pittsburgh.
- 1926
Served as one of five jurors for Pan-American Exhibition, Los Angeles.
- 1928
Twenty-one paintings exhibited at John Herron Art Institute, Indianapolis.
- 1931
Watercolor exhibition at H. Lieber Company Galleries, Indianapolis and Chester H. Johnson Galleries, Chicago.
- 1932
Winter Funeral awarded medal at Art Institute of Chicago. Painted mural *Moses the Law Giver* for Taos Court House (WPA project).
- 1933
One of five New Mexico artists included in exhibition **Painting and Sculpture from 16 American Cities**, Museum of Modern Art, New York.
- 1937
Married Marion Koogler McNay; moved to San Antonio. (Divorced 1940).
- 1940
Returned to Taos to live for remainder of his life; Exhibition of watercolors at Ferargil Galleries, New York and Childs Gallery, Boston.
- 1945-49
Painted his series of "Little Gems."
- 1946
Exhibited and awarded purchase prize, Pomona College, Claremont, California.
- 1949
August 23, died of heart attack in Taos.
- 1956
Exhibition, Harwood Foundation, Taos.
- 1957
Memorial Exhibition, Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.
- 1972
Retrospective Exhibition, Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.
- 1975
Jointly-sponsored exhibition, University of Notre Dame and Indianapolis Museum of Art.
- 1981
Exhibition, Harwood Foundation, Taos.
-
34.
Red Mountains
oil on canvas
19" x 27"
Collection King Investment Co.
Dallas, Texas
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico



VICTOR HIGGINS

VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO

At a time and place where illustration often passed for fine art in America, the painting of Victor Higgins is a celebration of themes reflective of longed-for native experience but freed from the cloistered, retrograde tradition in which he was trained. Higgins never set out to be a rebel. By virtue of his artistic education and early associations Higgins began, and could have remained, an essentially conservative romantic-realist painter. Ignoring revolutionary new art in Europe, Chicago's art academies at the turn of the century were content to provide a solid tradition and discipline grounded on the principles that made the old masters great. Higgins' study there (1899-1910) and in Europe (1910-1913) bypassed avant-garde art, though while abroad he encountered the work of painters who had laid the foundation for so much twentieth-century art: the Impressionists and Cézanne.

Once back in the United States, Higgins soon saw the advanced work of European and American artists at the scaled-down Chicago version of the epoch-making 1913 Armory Show. Organized by a group of practicing artists, this large invitational exhibition was an historical survey of the various modern movements. Some of the painting and sculpture shown was comfortably familiar to American audiences; most of it, however, was distressingly strange. To laymen as well as to conservative American artists like Higgins, the shockingly new painting of the Fauves, Post-Impressionists, Synchromists and Cubists took some getting used to. Its effects were less immediately felt in Higgins' work than in that of many other American painters. Paul Burlin and Andrew Dasburg exhibited in the Armory Show;

by the time they came to New Mexico (in 1913 and 1918 respectively) they brought with them a vision forever altered. Even realists like George Bellows and John Sloan read the Armory Show's message of form, finding their own work lacking in structure. Higgins, who first visited Taos in 1914, associated with all these painters in New Mexico, but it was some time before the modernist lessons of the Armory Show found their way into his own painting.

First he met and dealt with the vigorous painter-illustrators who had preceded him to Taos. Before 1920 Higgins' trips west were seasonal. He remained a Chicago painter, serving as president of the Chicago Society of Artists as late as 1919. By then, however, he had also put down roots in Taos. Elected an active member of the Taos Society of Artists in 1917, Higgins joined a lively, if sometimes contentious, group of painters who had organized two years earlier to market their work jointly via traveling exhibitions.¹ Though by no means innovative painters, Higgins' Taos colleagues passed along to him their high-keyed color, interest in native subjects, and knowledge of how to handle the brilliant light of New Mexico skies. Soon, absorbing these lessons, Higgins began to shake off the moribund tonalities of his Chicago, Paris and Munich academic training. And, recalling the formal experiments he first saw at the Armory Show, he looked for ways to incorporate them into his own work.

The first attempts were timid and halting; Later, with growing confidence, Higgins would filter European and American artistic innovations through his own temperament, adapting them

to the subjects he found in New Mexico. Direct quotations, or at least close paraphrasing, marked the first efforts and lingered even into the twenties. In several allegorical paintings Higgins produced around 1923, diaphanous nudes based on those of Arthur B. Davies weightlessly inhabit stagelike New Mexico landscapes, insipid atavisms from an elegiac past (no. 12). Fortunately, Higgins' refusal to confront the southwestern landscape on its own terms was temporary; he soon abandoned sentimental landscape evocations and unabashed romantic escapism. For help in clearing away the pictorial debris, Higgins turned to the camera.

In the early years Higgins often used photographs as studies for his paintings. Among the several hundred photographs preserved by his daughter are snapshots of the artist and his young wife Sara exploring the New Mexico countryside, visiting Indian dances and fording streams in their old Model-T. In one of these photographs Higgins himself trains a camera on the landscape. Outdoors he recorded the architecture, trees, animals and skies of New Mexico; indoors, often as direct studies for paintings, he captured Indian models in poses difficult to sustain. Many photographs of Taos Indians were taken on the occasions of dances or ceremonies. These figure groups later appeared, freely rearranged, in Higgins' pueblo scenes, one example of which is *Promenade in Taos* (no. 31).

The selective focus of the camera lens helped Higgins to isolate and frame landscape subjects. Rather than paint a whole forest of aspen, he could record a synoptic fragment which

could later be modified in the studio to suit his architectonic sense of design. Groves of barebranched trees provided Higgins with an austere scaffolding for these compositions, which read more like intellectual exercises than studies from nature. Indeed, one of these tree compositions was exhibited in 1931 under the title *Quadrilateral Lines*.² The visual asperity, relieved occasionally by a startling green conifer or canted trunks that defeat otherwise perfect parallels, suggests a mind withdrawn into its private concerns. One wonders if these paintings are visual analogues of the artist's own sense of isolation. Is he the solitary bent conifer so incongruous among the upright aspen? Writing years after their divorce and Higgins' death, Sara Parsons Mack recalled, "Although Victor was an outward man in many ways . . . he was actually what I would call an inward man. After I was married to him I realized how very much alone he was, how deeply he lived inside himself where only his painting genius could contact him."³

Whether Higgins included himself symbolically in his paintings must remain a speculative question. Less heuristic, however, are his developing aesthetic concerns; these are traceable in his words, his choices of subject and, increasingly, in his formal approach.

To return briefly to his use of the camera: in that era of black and white photography the camera, by eliminating the distractions of color, helped Higgins to establish pattern strengths in his painting. A favorite studio prop was an enormous black Santa Clara Pueblo pot, frequently photographed and often painted by

71.
Studio Gates/Taos Mountains
watercolor on paper
21" x 24"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico





50.
The Beadworker
oil on canvas
29 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO

Higgins. Its shiny roundness could be silhouetted as a flat shape against a light adobe wall or, when tilted slightly, present itself as a three dimensional dark mass echoing other opaque solids and supplying deliberate textural contrasts. Its cool, understated plasticity against the soft matte texture of adobe asserts in the strongest possible terms the tactile and value oppositions: polished jet black hardness versus pale creamy softness. At least a dozen Higgins' paintings from the 1915 to 1925 decade, including *The Bead Worker* (no. 50), feature this pot—not merely as an accessory, but as a conscious design element. It is such a strong form, and so prominently situated, that it functions in *The Bead Worker* as a crucial structural mass. Describing the pot's contours are arcs which Higgins repeats in the head, arm and skirt of the Pueblo girl, while the vessel's broad shiny surface reflects—like the still surface of dark water—adjacent colors and shapes. Cool whiteness from the walls impinges delicately on the edge of the pot; a rectangular shape—perhaps a studio window—appears more definitively. With a sureness born of protracted looking, Higgins plays off the pot's unequivocal convexity against the essential flatness of the girl's skirt. And the warm-toned whiteness there advances forward from the cool, receding paleness of the wall behind. With the help of his camera and his own growing sense of formal order, Higgins has orchestrated broad, simple shapes into a composition of harmony and quiet strength. These qualities enabled Higgins here, and in much of his work to follow, to sidestep the shallow stream of narrative flowing from many Taos studios.

Higgins' love of rigorous order and underlying structure led him to look for

geometric shapes in many other subjects. In painting pueblo scenes, for example, he frequently included the hemispherical shape of outdoor horn ovens against the verticals and horizontals of buildings *At the Pueblo*, (no. 10). Circles and spheres appear often in Higgins' work—sometimes prosaically, as in the pottery and horn forms, sometimes ethereally, as in the elliptical rainbow of *Pablita Passes (Walking Rain)*, no. 29. His predilection for sculptural roundness is seen in many early landscapes, for example, *Promenade in Taos* (no. 31). Two other landscape oils in the present exhibition demonstrate the same handling (no. 23 and no. 22); here too the contours of mountains are softened and regularized to a degree seldom seen in the Southwest. In the well-known *Indian Girl with Parrot and Hoop* (Indianapolis Museum of Art), the circle is frontal and forthright. Elsewhere, as in the cosmic circles of *Circumferences* (the Snite Museum of Art), in the enveloping roundness, repeated in shadow, of a sleeping model (no. 43) or in the brushy edges of a container of white flowers (no. 55), circles or their arcuated segments are subtle presences of geometry. They describe and contain an overtly random arrangement of fish on a tabletop *Seven Trout*, (no. 38). Or, flattened into an ellipse for the sake of perceived visual depth, circular tracks in the soft snow are the only intrusion of the present into the utterly timeless, tranquil place that was *Taos in Winter* (no. 45).

Their sheer numbers and inventive contextual placement demand that the circular forms in Higgins' work be considered as more than gratuitous formal elements; they are touchstones on a slow journey from the picturesque to the realm of formal problem solving.

Along the way Higgins appropriated various widely-used modes of formal inquiry. With his camera, as discussed above, he captured and isolated pictorial elements. From Cézanne and Seurat he learned that a painting must exist as a design of flat pattern even as it creates the illusion of depth. From the Cubists he learned something about testing pictorial reality against that of the naturalistic idiom. And from certain mathematically-formulated systems Higgins acquired an appreciation for proportion, intervals and the abstract beauty of geometric form.

Higgins' encounters with the breakaway theory and practice of twentieth-century art are visible over a broad span of time and subjects in his work, but they appear first in his still lifes. Why there? For one thing, still life objects, because they can be selected, rejected, arranged and rearranged at will, give the artist the most immediate means of exercising his compositional skills. Although they sometimes dry up or decay, they neither tire, move, nor become restless. Preliminary and fundamental choices replace the *givens* of portrait subjects or the prevailing character of a landscape (especially evident in the self-assertive, sometimes overpowering New Mexico terrain). Devoid of innate literary or narrative interest, still life subjects demand the painter's close attention to structure and relationship—both of which interested Higgins. In fact, the points at which Higgins turned to still life reflect not only his progressive mastery of registering personal visual sensations, but demonstrate as well his changing technical and structural concerns.

Christmas Cactus, (no. 11) from the

1920s, is a New Mexico still life which reveals Higgins' preoccupation with integrating solid masses and flat, geometric patterning. The overall composition suggests two antecedents: the use of strong diagonals is reminiscent of Japanese prints and Degas, while the severe cropping of peripheral objects such as the bed and plaid drape is a reminder of photography. Within the painting Higgins' now-familiar use of curves provides continuity: the sweeping arc describing the upper configuration of the plant is visually supported below by twin curves in the white pot and saucer. These curves are echoed in the fireplace opening to which the eye is drawn along the diagonal on the floor.⁴ That receding diagonal spatial axis opens up the scaffolding of diagonals on which Higgins' entire composition hangs. The strong diagonal designs in the blue and white drape, in the patchwork table cover and in the background floor make the pictorial elements cohere in a satisfying way. But the unified effect is far from accidental; these, in fact, are the squares, diagonals and studied root rectangles of Dynamic Symmetry. From the exact center of the painting's upper edge a right angle, formed by lines in the plaid drape, sets up a diagonal grid which—though visually interrupted as it meets other surfaces—extends an unseen spatial organization throughout the painting. Jay Hambidge's system of Dynamic Symmetry, based on arithmetical analysis of natural forms, was widely used by American artists, including a number of other New Mexico painters, in the 1920s and 1930s.⁵ Higgins referred on more than one occasion to his use of Dynamic Symmetry, recalling conversations with Jay Hambidge⁶ and explaining: "He [the modernist painter] has his superstructure, his foundation... These



30.
Petunias
oil on canvas
48" x 48"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO

must be true mathematically or his picture is going to fall down on him."⁷ Typically, as in *Christmas Cactus*, Higgins' superstructure of Dynamic Symmetry is well concealed in the final painting, but in a drawing of three nudes (collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Museum of New Mexico,) the converging diagonals and gridwork of Dynamic Symmetry are clearly visible. Other Higgins paintings are similarly organized: *Pueblo of Taos* (Anschutz Collection), *Mexican Boy* (Collection, Don Calvin) and *Winter Funeral* (Harwood Foundation Collection) all suggest Hambidge's principles.

Whether precisely measured or freely adapted to his own purposes, the theory of Dynamic Symmetry provides an understanding of the intellectual side of Higgins' painting. After *Christmas Cactus*, he returned periodically to still life subjects with other theoretical approaches. Departing from a mode of cool tonality and geometric restraint, Higgins painted a still life in which his brushstrokes are charged with nervous energy. Lively serpentine curves define the container in *Zinnias and Stars* (no. 58), a painting strongly expressionistic in feeling, with a gestural quality evocative of Van Gogh and a decorative treatment reminiscent of Matisse. Echoing the container's lines are gracefully errant flower sprigs waving gently in the star-sprinkled space above. These playful stars, however, serve more than a decorative purpose. Gradations in their size and placement call attention first to the surface of the painting, then to a middle ground inhabited by the flowers, and finally to spatial depth beyond. Higgins has deliberately downplayed theory and formal investigation in favor of sheer visual

exuberance; this is among the most joyous and lighthearted of all his paintings.

But still life subjects, as already seen, were more commonly vehicles for Higgins' most rigorous formal inquiries. One such experiment involved the use of multiple perspectives, a device borrowed from Cézanne and the cubists, in which a forward-tipped table top belies the eye level prevalent elsewhere in the painting. Boldly striped rugs or fabrics helped Higgins establish this dual viewpoint in *Floral Still Life* (no. 15) and *Hollyhocks* (no. 18). In the latter painting Higgins also placed the table, vase and striped cloth off center to relieve the static symmetry of the vertical floral arrangement. And the space surrounding the flowers resonates with shimmering color nuances and directional brushstrokes borrowed from the blossoms and leaves. In both these still life paintings Higgins—again employing a Cubist device—brings the objects forward to the surface of the canvas so that the spatial depth around them becomes deliberately ambiguous. These formal tensions, of ostensible verisimilitude in subject undercut by purposeful distortion in viewpoint and spatial handling, activate otherwise bland subjects.

These paintings are part of a long flirtation with Cubist concepts, not confined to still life subjects, but embracing figures, interiors and the landscape as well. Examples such as *Gladiolas* (no. 16) and *Nude Study* (no. 66), painted perhaps a dozen years apart, show Higgins' continual Cubist preoccupations during the twenties and thirties. But the same examples demonstrate his hesitation to claim the full-blown Cubist vision as his own.

Never did Higgins attempt a radical fracturing of form. Instead he introduced overlapping planes, zigzag shadow patterns and heightened angularities which suggest, but do not exhaustively explore, the Cubist mode.

Only in landscape subjects did Higgins allow a genuine Cubist restructuring to enter his work. And even then he chose subjects that met him at least halfway. *Taos Street in Winter* (no. 48), for example, is a cluster of buildings only a short distance from Higgins' Taos studio—simple adobe structures already reduced to the polyhedrons of solid geometry. Retaining only enough detail to establish physical reality, Higgins simplifies them further, as Braque had done at L'Estaque before 1910. Higgins plays with the angles of pitched roofs, the choice of which includes more canted planes than in the ubiquitous flat-roofed structures of Taos. Tonal variations help set off adjacent walls one from another and lead the viewer's eye diagonally forward and back, to be stopped only by conscious "framing" elements. The muddy street circumscribing the buildings, together with the ragged clouds above, contains the composition while repeating the syncopated angularities of the central structures.

Subtler explorations of geometric forms in the townscape were Higgins' paintings of his own studio environs. *Studio Gates and Taos Mountains* (no. 71), one of a series he began in the late twenties, integrates a background of chaotically compressed mountains beneath a turbulent sky with a foreground of shallow planar recession. Painted from the courtyard of his studio on Kit Carson Road, this composition

exploits intentional spatial manipulations: the mountains are brought much closer to the foreground than they are, and the artist has climbed well above ground level (probably on the steps outside his studio) to look sharply down on the studio gates. He has consolidated and transferred gains won in his still life spatial experiments into a landscape subject.

The fractured desert landscapes Higgins sometimes painted further elucidate his Cubist formal concerns, but again, the subject came to meet him. In *Taos Valley* (no. 49), for example, the blocky foreground rocks are part of the same tortured topography as the mountains beyond, both twisted into a unity of faceted shapes by some ancient seismic upheaval. Chunky clouds above are nearly as massive and solid as the earth; the whole vision is strikingly similar to certain New Mexico landscapes Marsden Hartley painted before 1920. Both painters suppressed detail to strengthen the masses, seeking pictorial equivalents for qualities invisible to the senses yet expressive of complex relationships between nature and the artist.

But it was John Marin whose vision of the southwestern landscape impinged most strongly on Higgins. Much has been made of Marin's influence, during and after his two summers' work in New Mexico in 1929 and 1930. His fresh renderings of the cadences of the land did indeed open up new visual possibilities and encouraged such artists as B.J.O. Nordfeldt, Andrew Dasburg, Ward Lockwood and Jozef Bakos to turn to watercolor. Higgins had worked in watercolor periodically during the 1920s and had developed a

VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO

technique that brought him critical acclaim. C. J. Bulliet, reviewing in the *Chicago Evening Post* a 1931 exhibition of Taos paintings, called Higgins' watercolors "the freshest and most vigorous we have seen in many months."⁸

Within the next few years Marin's bold directional spatial organization clearly catalyzed new movement and energy in Higgins' watercolors as well as in his oils. *Winter Funeral*, painted about 1931, owes something to the measured intervals of Dynamic Symmetry; but visible too are Marin's aggressive use of diagonals and internal framing elements. What counts though, is that Higgins has fused an extrinsic influences into a hauntingly personal, unforgettable painting—one of his greatest successes.

While a watercolor of *Fields and Mountains* (no. 62) recalls the robustly-contoured hills of Marin's 1929 New Mexico landscapes, other paintings—such as Marin's *Taos Indian Girl*, an attenuated version of Higgins' seated Indian models—suggest that the influences were reciprocal.⁹ And, to point out a fundamental difference between the two artists, Marin—particularly in his 1930 New Mexico watercolors—fractured form radically, sometimes explosively. Higgins, on the other hand, synthesized geometric forms in his watercolors, building up planes in a solid, systematic fashion.

Final decisions on the Marin-Higgins influences await the appearance of a definitive Higgins catalogue raisonné; until then thorny questions of sequence and dating remain at least somewhat conjectural. (Higgins dated very little of

his work.) What is certain, however, is that following a period of prolonged exploration in the swift fluidity of watercolor Higgins' landscapes announce a new certainty and self assurance. By 1932 he was recommending watercolor to other artists as a means of increasing freedom and spontaneity in their oils.¹⁰ And his own subsequent watercolors herald a nascent withdrawal from the specificity of time and place into a realm where light and color are his real subjects. Light not merely permeates, but actively invades his paintings. And, like Turner a century before, Higgins began to analogize the transparency of watercolor in the scumbled surfaces of some of his 1930s oils, such as *Figure Composition* (no. 13).

Though enhanced by concentrated forays into watercolor, Higgins' interest in the pictorial and emotive roles of color and light was by no means new. After only a season or two in New Mexico he had praised to a midwestern audience the pleasure he took in painting the brilliant riot of colors worn by the Indian women of the Southwest.¹¹ And asked in later years why he liked to paint in Taos, he consistently replied, "Because of the light, there is the best light here to be found anywhere. There is more color in the landscape and the people than elsewhere."¹²

Changes in Higgins' highly-developed color sense paralleled his general artistic trajectory. No doubt his interest in color theory was stimulated by his acquaintance, from the Armory Show onward, with the pre-1920 movements of Orphism and Synchromism, two theories which asserted the primacy of color, harmony and rhythm in painting.

In 1928 Higgins exhibited a still life he called *Red Orange, Blue Green and Yellow*, a title very like those the Synchromist painters used, and one that suggests Higgins was investigating the expressive and structural properties of complementary colors.¹³ This painting, also known as *Still Life—Dynamic Symmetry*, is by no means a composition of abstract multicolored prisms and whirling discs like those painted by Stanton MacDonald-Wright and Morgan Russell before 1920.¹⁴ It is instead a forthrightly realistic still life similar to *Christmas Cactus*. Apparently Higgins wanted to combine the structure of Dynamic Symmetry with the orchestrated color harmonies of Synchromism—all within one painting.

The heyday of color theories in American art had passed with a general retreat from abstraction, but Higgins' interest and experiments with chromatics continued even into the 1930s: "I mean scientific color harmonies," he explained, "just as musical harmonies have been worked out. The color scientists in Yale and Harvard, for instance, are doing more for art in the present moment in their color studies than most people realize."¹⁵

But Higgins' fascination with the intrinsic properties of color was not merely theoretical. His work demonstrates an empirical approach to color based on two methods that had strongly informed twentieth-century art. One was the Impressionist mode of considering color as warm and cool. In this vein Higgins painted a number of canvases, discovering tonal subtleties to which his brush responded with animation. Already cited are the warm and cool whites of *The Bead Worker*.

Higgins restricted his palette even further for *Taos in Winter* (no. 45). Here the values are closely integrated, imposing a unity of light which suffuses the entire canvas. The cool opacity of a flattened sky finds tonal echoes in passages of snow and in the sharper accents of doors and windows, while warmer hues raise the chromatic temperature of selected walls. Pale neutrals and inflected surfaces modulate the close harmonies of this extremely subtle, light-infused painting. It is as if Higgins has answered in objective terms the cool-warm modulations of Kasimir Malevich's landmark *Suprematist Composition: White on White* (1918; Museum of Modern Art, New York).

Another example of Higgins' use of chromatic unities to impose a mood is his portrait *Spanish Girl* (no. 39). Here the whites in the girl's scarf, mitten and the background pick up flickers of the pale green in her coat. Through the phenomenon of complementary after-image (in which, for example, the eye retains briefly a red image of a green stimulus), the white areas adjoining the green are warmed, appearing slightly pink. The space seems to resonate softly with these faint color vibrations, especially around the girl's head, where a delicate halo form materializes. In both *Spanish Girl* and *Taos in Winter* the evenness of tonality and formal simplicity lend emotional quietude and solemnity to the subjects.

Higgins' other method of seeking light, like that of Matisse, was through the opposition of hues. Placing color against color so as to reveal inherent light in the interval between them called for quite a different methodology from that discussed

45.
Taos in Winter
oil on canvas
30" x 36"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico





39.
Spanish Girl
oil on canvas
27" x 17"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

VICTOR HIGGINS IN NEW MEXICO

above. Although he applied it to various subjects, this color juxtaposition is perhaps best seen in Higgins' landscapes. *Storm* (no. 44) is an oil executed with both boldness and finesse. Formal strengths lie in the low muscular hills and rhythmically contoured mountains, suggesting the clean organic vision of Georgia O'Keeffe. But color becomes the true generating function of the painting, its essence and its content. So strong are the chromatic contrasts, so decisive the division of foreground and background, that one wants to infer a symbolic struggle between the forces of light and darkness. Only after longer musing do Higgins' subtler elements emerge, in passages that buffer the overt discreteness of the horizontal planes. The blue of the most distant range, seen through storm-generated atmospheric haze, is repeated in the blue of the sloping middle ground. This central band of blue, by absorbing foreground warmth in the wedge on the left side and in red-orange patches on the hills to the right, softens the harsh dissonances. The dark surface of the foreground tree mass is gently warmed too by light borrowed from its surroundings. *Storm* is the scene of an active struggle in which Higgins sought to subdue warring color elements and reconcile the fugitive effects of a rainstorm with the enduring solidity of the terrain. The stark simplicity and severe frontality of *Storm* are at once a summation and prefiguration of Higgins' work. Powerful horizontals running parallel to the picture plane and supporting simplified masses had been elements in some of his strongest landscapes. *Pablita Passes (Walking Rain)* (no. 29), *Green Picket Fence* (no. 17), and watercolors such as *Lobo Hills* (no. 64) exemplify this frontality.

By 1940 Higgins had served self-imposed apprenticeships to a number of theories and mentors.¹⁶ To the director of the Ferargil Galleries, about to open a show of his watercolors in New York, Higgins wrote that "outside of being rather thoroughly organized pictures of Taos and vicinity these pictures show an undercurrent of El Greco's application of Pythagorean philosophy and Euclidean geometry."¹⁷ He was still, at the age of 56, open to fresh approaches and aesthetic concerns. There were no apologies for reliance on theory; indeed, it was his receptivity to innovation that Higgins felt steered him "in the direction of rationalized painting which, even when scientific or quasi-scientific, was plastic enough to offer innumerable occasions for individual research and expression."¹⁸

So Higgins perceived theory as a foundation on which to build his own artistry. To ignore his attention to theory is to underestimate his capacity to transcend it. For Higgins, the process of artistic growth was at once the best reason for his continuing to paint and a painting's own best reason for being.

In the late series of small oils known as "little gems" Higgins finally came to grips with his concurrent needs for intellectual order and for expressing an innate poetic sensibility. Directness, frontality, vigorous sense of design and economy of means in these paintings are the carefully ordered side of Higgins. On the other hand their juicy, impastoed surfaces, high-keyed color and lyrical passages are the Higgins who could at last accept the facility of his own brush and allow himself a degree of painterly freedom missing from earlier oils. Surface tactility was

sometimes accentuated when Higgins used his brush handle to scratch tree trunks, fenceposts or his own signature into the thick paint. That some of these "little gems" were produced as potboilers for the tourist trade is undeniable; the weakest of them are merely scaled-down reprises, minus the life and monumentality, of his larger landscapes. But the best of them show that after more than thirty years in New Mexico Higgins was still moved to express the majesty of its mountains, crystalline blue skies, geometric forms and patterns of light and shadow (no. 9).

Further, the reconciliation of vivid three-dimensional space with surface flatness and a self-conscious celebration of the qualities of paint in the "little gems" series links these works to the concerns of modernist painting in the late forties. By no means did Higgins leap into the ranks of the avant-garde. He merely redefined for himself what painting is and what it is not. That it is not photography he had discovered with a camera at least twenty years earlier; now it was a confrontation with the tactile, nonsculptural flatness of the painted surface which again forced him closer to the essence of painting. The making of images finally was subsumed into the larger concern of making paintings.

Against the backdrop of his late landscape development, combined with artistic growth which brought him from a rigid academicism to a continually-maturing personal style, it is time for a historical reappraisal of Victor Higgins within American art. Even though artistic problem solving, fueled by passions for mathematical order, clarity and harmony, was a central impetus in Higgins' work, he never

allowed nature to become a mere pretext for formal experiments. Rather, he wedded theory to his own intuitive sense of visual harmonies, resulting in a rich and varied body of work.

At the very least, Higgins served as a link between his more conservative Taos colleagues and the developments that informed twentieth-century American art. Eventually, time may well confirm that Higgins and other innovative New Mexico painters contributed significantly—not merely to regional art, but to the broader context of American painting in this century. Relentlessly searching for new answers to old questions, Victor Higgins revealed his own passionate engagement with the world he inhabited. And his work continues to evoke in new generations of viewers a sense of recognition and wonder in his vision.

Sharyn R. Udall
Santa Fe, New Mexico

NOTES

- 1
Joseph H. Sharp, Ernest L. Blumenschein, Bert G. Phillips, Oscar E. Berninghaus, E. Irving Couse and W. Herbert (Buck) Dunton had preceded Higgins to Taos; they were the founding members in 1915 of the Taos Society of Artists.
- 2
Exhibition catalogue, Chester H. Johnson Galleries, Chicago, 1931.
- 3
Sara Mack, Foreword, **Victor Higgins 1884-1949: Retrospective Exhibition** catalogue. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, Fine Arts Museum, 1971-72.
- 4
This fireplace occupies a corner in Higgins's former studio on Kit Carson Road in Taos, a building which currently houses the Taos Book Store.
- 5
Raymond Jonson (1891-1982) and Emil Bisttram (1895-1976) were two of its strongest adherents in New Mexico.
- 6
Victor Higgins, The Santa Fe New Mexican, Artists' and Writers' Edition, 26 June 1940; (rpt. Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1982), p. 39. Higgins's interest in Dynamic Symmetry parallels his frequent mechanical drawings of many kinds of objects and machines, exercises in precision and exacting draftsmanship.
- 7
Ina Sizer Cassidy, *Art and Artists of New Mexico: Dunton and Higgins*, **New Mexico Magazine**, 10, No. 12 (1932), p. 22.
- 8
C. J. Bulliet, *Victor Higgins Makes Fresh Report of Taos*, **The Chicago Evening Post Magazine of the Art World**, 21 April 1931, p. 2.
- 9
Sheldon Reich, **John Marin: A Stylistic Analysis and Catalogue Raisonné** (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970), no. 30.64, p.629.
- 10
Arthur Haddock, Letter to Victor Higgins, 2 April 1934. Joan Higgins Reed Papers, Museum of New Mexico, Fine Arts Museum, Santa Fe. Haddock refers therein to advice given him by Victor Higgins in October, 1932.
- 11
The Taos Indian is an Artist, Bloomington, Illinois **Herald**; undated clipping, contextually from about 1915; Joan Higgins Reed Papers.
- 12
Cassidy, p. 42.
- 13
This painting was exhibited with those of other Taos and Santa Fe painters at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor. **El Palacio**, 25, No. 20 (1928), p.328.
- 14
Ellen W. Bradbury, *Victor Higgins: A Transitional Artist*, Master's Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1966, plate IV.
- 15
Cassidy, p. 22.
- 16
In addition to those cited previously, in the 1930s Higgins mentioned reading Hans Hofmann's writings and Wilenski's **Modern Movement in Art**. Correspondence, Joan Higgins Reed Papers.
- 17
Victor Higgins, Letter to director Price, Ferargil Galleries, quoted in **The Art Digest**, 15, No. 5 (1940), p. 11.
- 18
Victor Higgins, Artists' and Writers' Edition, p. 39.
44.
Storm
oil on canvas
17" x 19½"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico





49.
Taos Valley
oil on canvas
54" x 60"
Collection the Snite Museum of Art
Notre Dame, Indiana
Photo Robert Wallace
Indianapolis, Indiana

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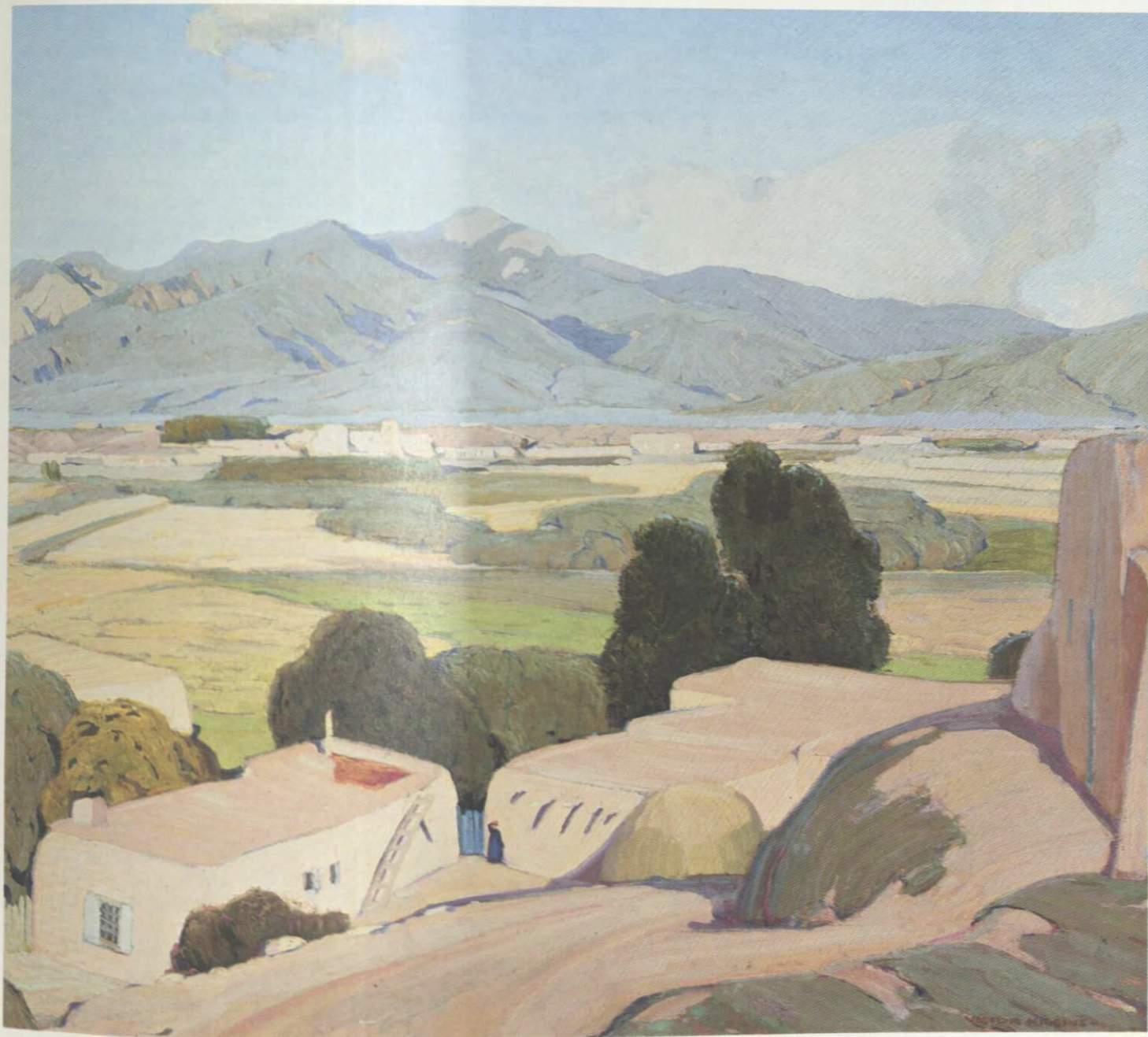
CHECKLIST FOR THE EXHIBITION

Unless otherwise noted all works are undated.

*Painting left untitled by artist. Title has been assigned by Museum of New Mexico.

Oils

1.
*Adobe Houses**
oil on canvas
12" x 14"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
2.
*Adobe Houses with Clouds**
oil on canvas
12" x 13 3/4"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
3.
*Adobe House and Fence**
oil on canvas
12" x 14"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
4.
*Adobe Houses with Mountains**
oil on canvas
14" x 16"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
5.
*Adobe House and Taos Mountains**
oil on canvas
20" x 24"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
6.
*Adobe House with Fence and Tree**
oil on canvas
13 3/4" x 15"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
7.
Adobe Houses with Trees
and Mountains*
oil on canvas
10 1/4" x 12"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
8.
*Adobe Houses with Women in Red**
oil on canvas
13 3/4" x 15 1/8"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
9.
Arroyo Hondo
oil on board
10" x 14"
Courtesy
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
10.
At the Pueblo
oil on canvas
16" x 20"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
11.
Christmas Cactus
oil on canvas
30" x 30"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
12.
Ceremony
oil on canvas
1923
34 1/4" x 36 1/8"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
13.
Figure Composition
oil on canvas
38 3/4" x 27"
Collection the Snite Museum of Art
Notre Dame, Indiana
Gift of Mr. John T. Higgins
14.
*Figure in White and Hills**
oil on canvas
8" x 9 7/8"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
15.
Floral Still Life
oil on canvas
32 1/8" x 36 1/8"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
16.
Gladiolas
oil on canvas
47 1/4" x 40"
Collection the Snite Museum of Art
Notre Dame, Indiana
Gift of Mr. John T. Higgins
17.
Green Picket Fence
oil on canvas
19 1/4" x 24 1/2"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
18.
Hollyhocks
oil on canvas
54" x 24 1/2"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
19.
Indian Paintbrush
oil on canvas
26 1/4" x 23 1/8"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
20.
*Interior Scene**
oil on canvas
12" x 14"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest



42.
Spring, Taos Valley (detail)
oil on canvas
43 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Collection Museum of Western Art
Denver, Colorado
Photo James Milmoie
Denver, Colorado



43.

Sleeping Model

oil on canvas

37½" x 23"

Collection Museum of Fine Arts

Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe

Joan Higgins Reed Bequest

Photo Robert Nugent

Santa Fe, New Mexico

CHECKLIST FOR THE EXHIBITION

21.
*Landscape with Clouds**
oil on canvas
7½" x 9"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
22.
*Landscape Green Hills and Clouds**
oil on canvas
6⅞" x 7⅞"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
23.
*Landscape with Man and Sheep**
oil on canvas
6" x 9"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
24.
*Landscape with Small Figure
on Bottom Center**
oil on canvas
12" x 14¼"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
25.
Mercedes
oil on canvas
26" x 18"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Gift of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
26.
*Mountain Landscape**
oil on canvas
13¾" x 17¾"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
27.
*Mountain and Trees**
oil on canvas
13¾" x 17⅞"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
28.
Moustached Man in Black Coat
oil on canvas
36" x 28"
Wichita State University
Endowment Association Art Collection
Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Art
Wichita, Kansas
29.
Pablita Passes (Walking Rain)
oil on canvas
40" x 43"
Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
On permanent loan from
Robert L. B. Tobin
30.
Petunias
oil on canvas
48" x 48"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
31.
Promenade in Taos
oil on canvas
18½" x 20½"
Collection City of Scottsdale, Arizona
Scottsdale Art Center
Donated by the
Honorable John Pritzlaff, Jr.
32.
Pueblo by a Stream
oil on canvas
9½" x 18"
Collection Roswell Museum
and Art Center
Roswell, New Mexico
33.
Portrait of a Shepherd
oil on canvas
15½" x 13"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
34.
Red Mountains
oil on canvas
19" x 27"
Collection King Investment Co.
Dallas, Texas
35.
Red Orchard
oil on canvas
10⅞" x 18"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
36.
Red String
oil on canvas
24" x 27"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
37.
Red Tree and Adobe House
oil on canvas
13½" x 16"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
38.
Seven Trout
oil on canvas
17¼" x 24¼"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
39.
Spanish Girl
oil on canvas
27" x 17"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
40.
Spanish Well
oil on canvas
27" x 19¾"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

CHECKLIST FOR THE EXHIBITION

41.
Spring Breeze
oil on canvas
31½" x 24"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
42.
Spring, Taos Valley
oil on canvas
43¾" x 45¾"
Collection Museum of Western Art
Denver, Colorado
43.
Sleeping Model
oil on canvas
37½" x 23"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
44.
Storm
oil on canvas
17" x 19½"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
45.
Taos in Winter
oil on canvas
30" x 36"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
46.
Taos Mountains in Spring
oil on canvas
12" x 17"
Collection Museum of Western Art
Denver, Colorado
47.
Taos Retreat
oil on canvas
12" x 14"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
48.
Taos Street in Winter
oil on canvas
17½" x 27"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
49.
Taos Valley
oil on canvas
54" x 60"
Collection the Snite Museum of Art
Notre Dame, Indiana
50.
The Beadworker
oil on canvas
29¼" x 28¾"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
51.
*Trees**
oil on canvas
10" x 11¾"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
52.
*Trees and Rocks**
oil on canvas
12¼" x 14"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
53.
Untitled (Nude with Arms Crossed)
oil on canvas
26" x 18"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
54.
Untitled (Nude in Chair)
oil on canvas
38" x 30"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
55.
White Flowers
oil on canvas
30" x 27"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
56.
Winter Fields
oil on canvas
14" x 18"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico
57.
Yellow Flowers
oil on canvas
26½" x 30"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
58.
Zinnias and Stars
oil on canvas
24" x 30"
Collection Of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico
- Watercolors**
59.
Canyon Landscape
watercolor on paper
18" x 22"
Collection The Harwood Foundation
Taos, New Mexico
60.
Edge of Taos
watercolor on paper
16" x 18"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico



29.

Pablita Passes (Walking Rain)

oil on canvas

40" x 43"

Museum of Fine Arts

Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe

On permanent loan from

Robert L. B. Tobin

Photo Robert Nugent

Santa Fe, New Mexico



6.
*Adobe House with Fence and Tree**
oil on canvas
13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 15"
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest
Photo Robert Nugent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

CHECKLIST FOR THE EXHIBITION

61.
Fall Cottonwood
watercolor on paper
22" x 18"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

62.
Fields and Mountains
watercolor on paper
15" x 21 $\frac{7}{8}$ "
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest

63.
Landscape Taos, New Mexico
watercolor on paper
15 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Mrs. Laura Hersloff Bequest

64.
Lobo Hills
watercolor on paper
15" x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe
Joan Higgins Reed Bequest

65.
New Mexico Landscape
watercolor on paper
19" x 26"
Collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Peters
Santa Fe, New Mexico

66.
Nude Study
watercolor on paper
24" x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Collection Museum of Fine Arts
Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe

67.
Pueblo and Dark Mountains
watercolor on paper
12 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

68.
Red Mesa
watercolor on paper
20" x 24"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

69.
Solitary Adobe
watercolor on paper
14 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Collection Roswell Museum
and Art Center
Roswell, New Mexico
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Winston

70.
Stream Running through Valley
watercolor on paper
16 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico

71.
Studio Gates/Taos Mountains
watercolor on paper
21" x 24"
Collection of
E. W. and Anna Leise Sargent
Santa Fe, New Mexico



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Laura Gilpin, 1947
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Fort Worth, Texas

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Design

Patricia J. Fugitt, Corpus Christi, Texas

Photography

James O. Milmoie, Denver, Colorado
Robert Nugent, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Robert Wallace, Indianapolis, Indiana

Printing

Golden Banner Press, Inc.
Corpus Christi, Texas

ART MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS
1902 North Shoreline
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401
512/884-3844

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