

THE IRVINE MUSEUM

18881 Von Karman Avenue, Suite 100, Irvine, California 92612

Recorded Information (949) 476-2565

Bookstore and Offices (949) 476-0294

www.irvinemuseum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Director of Media

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Passionate Visions: Paintings by Botke, DeRome, Rider & Wendt

Exhibit opens May 19th and continues through September 8, 2007

The Irvine Museum offers a show which features four artists with differing yet equally passionate artistic points of view. **Jessie Arms Botke** (1883-1971) is nationally known as one of the important American Art Deco painters. Her elegant and brightly colored paintings of exotic birds and plants stand out for their sheer power to dazzle the eyes of the viewer. **Albert Thomas DeRome** (1885-1959) became known for beautifully composed and intimate views of the California coastline. De Rome's favorite subjects were Point Lobos, the sand dunes in Carmel, rural Monterey County and the California Missions. **Arthur Grover Rider** (1886-1975) was among the best colorists in America. His paintings are known for their intense, brilliant light. **William Wendt** (1865-1946) painted exactly what he saw in nature with warm colors and outstanding effects of light and shadow. The tranquility, strength and sense of well being of his work appealed to a wide audience.

The Irvine Museum is dedicated to the preservation and display of California art of the Impressionist Period (1890-1930). Open: Tuesday through Saturday, 11-5. Admission to the museum is free and we validate parking. A docent tour is available to the public every Thursday, at 11:15

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Jessie Arms Botke

Born May 27, 1883 in Chicago, Illinois

Died October 2, 1971 in Santa Paula, California

Jessie Arms grew up in Chicago spending much of her leisure time sketching and painting. In 1897 and 1898 she enrolled in intermediate classes at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Then after graduating from high school, she decided to pursue a career as a painter and enrolled as a full time student at the Art Institute. Moving to New York City in 1911, she worked at Herter Looms, preparing tapestry cartoons under the guidance of Albert Herter (1871-1950). She developed a special talent for depicting birds and assisted Herter with a mural for the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco.

In 1914, the artist traveled to Santa Barbara to assist Herter's wife, Adele, with the decoration of a private home. On a brief stopover in Chicago, she met the Dutch-born artist Cornelis Botke (1887-1954). They were married in 1915 in Leonia, New Jersey.

Botke and her husband then moved to Chicago where they collaborated on two major mural commissions: one for the Kellogg Company, the other for Noyes Hall at the University of Chicago. They visited California in 1918, and moved there the following year, settling in Carmel. From 1923 to 1925, they traveled throughout Europe.

In 1927, they moved to the southern part of the state, living in Los Angeles, but they didn't like the fast pace of city life and so they bought ten acres of ranch property at Wheeler Canyon, Santa Paula in Ventura County. Jessie loved the ranch and with Cornelis and their son, she was able to combine fine art with farming. Apparently she required little sleep and seemed to be nourished and refreshed by her work, which consisted of painting six days a week, sketching on Sundays, as well as picking, pruning, pickling and canning. She always kept up with the current novels, did a lot of traveling, exhibiting, teaching and always had a steady stream of callers at their ranch.

Botke was not a plein air painter, but instead focused on decorative paintings of birds, both domestic and exotic. She worked in oil, watercolor, or gouache and often employed gold and silver leaf in the background. Her paintings were widely exhibited throughout the United States

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Albert Thomas DeRome

Born June 26, 1885 in Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County, California

Died July 31, 1959 in Carmel, California

Albert DeRome studied at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art (now known as the San Francisco Art Institute), where he met his future wife, Martha Sale, Albert and Martha married in 1901 and had a son, Albert Walton, in 1914 in San Francisco.

In 1905, DeRome worked as a cartoonist for the San Jose Mercury News. By 1908, he worked for an advertising firm that created art for billboards, signs and posters. In 1915, DeRome went to work for one of his best clients, a candy company, George Haas and Sons, as a sales manger. Albert traveled all over California visiting stores that sold Haas chocolates. In his car, he always had his portable easel, a box of watercolor paints and small canvases, so that he could paint mountains, lakes and mining cabins.

In 1931, at the age of 46, while on the job, DeRome's car collided, head on with another. He was hospitalized for 8 months with a broken neck and partial paralysis of his left side. The insurance settlement that assured the DeRome family of financial security for the rest of DeRome's life also prevented him from selling his artwork. He did exhibit as an "amateur" in Northern California, gaining recognition and several first prizes. He often gave his paintings away to friends and family in exchange for favors.

Though DeRome had to give up driving and steadied himself with a cane, he still went on long painting excursions around the Monterey Bay. During these years he painted primarily in oils, because his reflexes could no longer keep up with the watercolors. With time, his left arm grew stronger and he was once again able to hold a palette.

Albert became known for beautifully composed and beguiling views of the California coastline. Inspired by changes in the sea and the sky, his coastal paintings are of particular note, depicting lush foreground carpets of colorful vegetation, with the majestic crystal-blue and glass-green colors of the Pacific. His paintings always drew attention to nature's magnificent dimensions. DeRome shared this quality with artists such as Thomas Hill and Albert Bierstadt who's visions of nature was grand or majestic, whereas DeRome's was intimate.

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Arthur Grover Rider

Born March 21, 1886 in Chicago, Illinois

Died January 25, 1976 in Los Angeles, California

Arthur Rider attended the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. He then went to Europe where he studied at the Academie Colarossi and the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere in Paris. He spent several summers in Valencia, Spain, studying at the Werntz Academy of Fine Arts. This is when he met and befriended noted artist Joaquin Sorolla (1863-1923), who would be a great influence on his work. While in Spain he painted magnificent Sorolla-like scenes on the beach of Valencia. Like his mentor, Rider was a superb colorist.

Rider left Chicago in 1928 and moved to Laguna Beach. The light of Southern California beguiled him, and he painted landscapes and beach scenes near his home, using oil paints as well as watercolor. As was the case with many painters of Laguna Beach, Rider visited the Mission San Juan Capistrano on several occasions, painting views of the gardens and fountains. In 1931, he moved to Los Angeles and remained there for the rest of his life.

For thirty years, Rider worked as a scenic painter for Twentieth-Century Fox and MGM studios. Rider prepared sets for a large number of important films, including *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Robe*, and *Ben-Hur*. At that time, movies did not give screen credit to scenic artists, so unfortunately, few people know of his tremendous contributions to the golden age of Hollywood. He retired from the studios at the age of eighty-four.

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William Wendt

Born February 20, 1865 in Bentzen, Germany

Died December 29, 1946 in Laguna Beach, California

Wendt immigrated to the U.S. in 1880, settling in Chicago where he worked in a commercial art firm. Essentially self-taught, he attended evening classes at the Art Institute of Chicago for only a brief period. Dissatisfied with figure studies, he preferred painting landscapes and quickly became an active exhibitor in various Chicago art shows.

In 1906, Wendt married Julia Bracken, a sculptor from Chicago and then settled into a combination home-studio he had bought in Los Angeles. The two worked harmoniously together, she in the studio and he wandering the hills sketching, then returning to translate his sketches into finished landscapes.

Wendt painted exactly what he saw in nature with warm colors and outstanding effects of light and shadow. The tranquility, strength and sense of well-being of his work appealed to a wide audience. Only rarely did he include people or animals in his landscapes. His early works reflect the feathery brush strokes and hazy atmosphere of Impressionism. In his later works, after about 1912, he employed a distinctive block-like brushwork giving solidity to his renditions of natural forms.

Wendt was a founding member of the California Art Club in 1909. He moved his home and studio to the art colony of Laguna Beach in 1912 and was a founding member of the Laguna Beach Art Association in 1918. Although he was somewhat shy and reclusive, Wendt was Laguna's most important resident artist-teacher. He and his wife, Julia, lived in Laguna until her death in 1942 and William's death in 1946.