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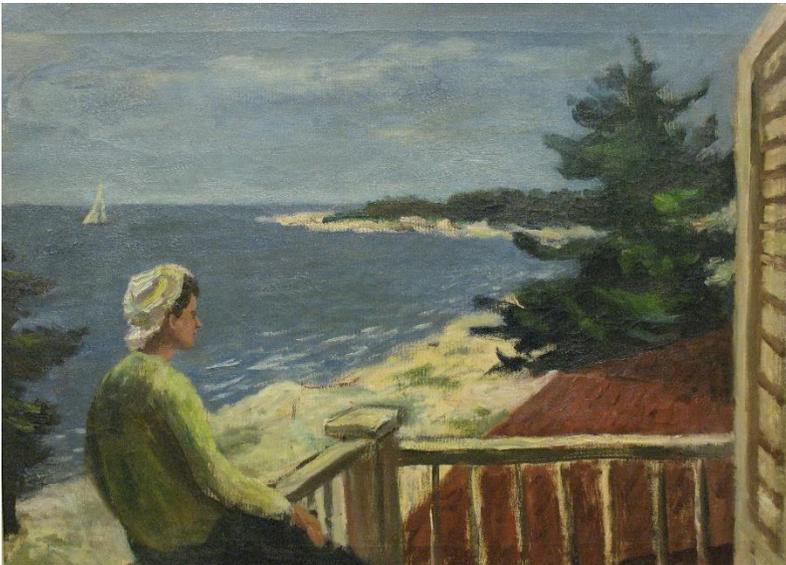
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## PAINTINGS BY WALLACE SMITH FEATURED AT SHELDON ART GALLERIES

ST. LOUIS, MO - The Sheldon Art Galleries continues its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season with *Wallace Herndon Smith: Paintings and Drawings*, February 15 – April 13, 2019 in the Bellwether Gallery of St. Louis Artists. **An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, February 15, 2019 from 5-7 p.m.** The Sheldon Art Galleries are open Tuesdays, Noon – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays – Fridays, Noon – 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission. Admission is free. For more information on exhibitions, visit [TheSheldon.org](http://TheSheldon.org).



This exhibit features 27 oil paintings and watercolors painted between 1927 and 1976 and focuses on works made on and after travels to Europe and in Michigan. Wallace Herndon Smith traveled frequently, creating from these experiences atmospheric scenes that perhaps evoked the emotional tone of his inner life. Often only populated by lone figures, his landscapes and street scenes seem to reflect the influence of his friend, Edward Hopper. Smith was always a painter with traditional sensibilities and shunned abstract expressionism, however his works show a keen interest for underlying abstract concepts like structure, composition and color relationships. Melding formal concerns with the emotional, he brought his own form of experimentation to his works through the rendering of the world, first in atmospheric, tightly painted works reminiscent of the Regionalists, and later in colorful, exuberant paintings that were rendered with loose brushwork that evoked the work of Europeans like Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse. Throughout his long career, Smith felt that his painting should reflect “life and the world” by representing elements of the visible environment.

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Born in St. Louis in 1901, Smith studied at l'École des Beaux-Arts in 1927, returning a year later to enroll in Washington University's architectural program, where he studied with Louis LaBeaume. He designed several homes, but painting remained the focus of his attention. In 1932 he and his wife Kelse moved to New York and befriended artists including Kuhn, Bacon and Hopper, who recommended one of his paintings for a prize in an exhibition in Philadelphia. Landscapes and street scenes from this period, and later, reflect Hopper's influence on Smith's work. In the late 1930s, Smith gained attention in New York and his work was included in exhibitions in New York galleries and at the Museum of Modern Art. During these early days, his work was characterized by its affinity to American Regionalism and his portraits were highly finished, quiet examinations of his subjects.

Smith and his wife moved to Philadelphia and both taught at the Tyler School of Art from 1938-1939. During the war years, the couple moved several times, spending large periods of time in St. Louis; Provincetown, Massachusetts; and Harbor Springs, Michigan, where Smith established a studio by Lake Michigan. Smith's work continued to gain maturity, and in the 1960s began to be characterized by loose brushwork. He studied physiognomy, color theory and composition, creating colorful, spontaneous renderings of friends, family, models and the architecture found on his travels. . His works illustrate a keen sensitivity to the psychological resonance of color, form, gesture and above all the atmosphere of a place. Always inquisitive and passionate about painting, Smith left behind a substantial body of work that reveals the artist's visual intelligence.

From its founding in 1998 to this winter's opening of four new exhibitions, the Sheldon Art Galleries have made their mark on the arts landscape for the past 20 years with some of the most unique, thought-provoking and diverse exhibitions in St. Louis. In this time, the Sheldon Art Galleries has organized or hosted 327 exhibits, and presented countless educational programs for young people and adults, which are offered free to the community.

The not-for-profit Sheldon Art Galleries exhibits works by local, national and international artists in all media. Over 6,000 square feet of the galleries' spaces on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor are permanently devoted to rotating exhibits of photography, architecture, music, art and history and children's art. A sculpture garden, seen from both the atrium lobby and the connecting glass bridge, features periodic rotations and installations, and the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Gallery on the lower level features art of all media. The Sheldon actively supports the work of St. Louis artists in all mediums and features a dedicated gallery with museum-quality exhibits by St. Louis artists, past and present.

Financial Assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency. Support is provided by the Regional Arts Commission and the Arts and Education Council.

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**Image caption:** Wallace Herndon Smith, *Michigan Scene*, n.d., oil on canvas, collection of the Bellwether Foundation