

# SIX WISCONSIN PAINTERS

By SAMUEL N. MANIERRE

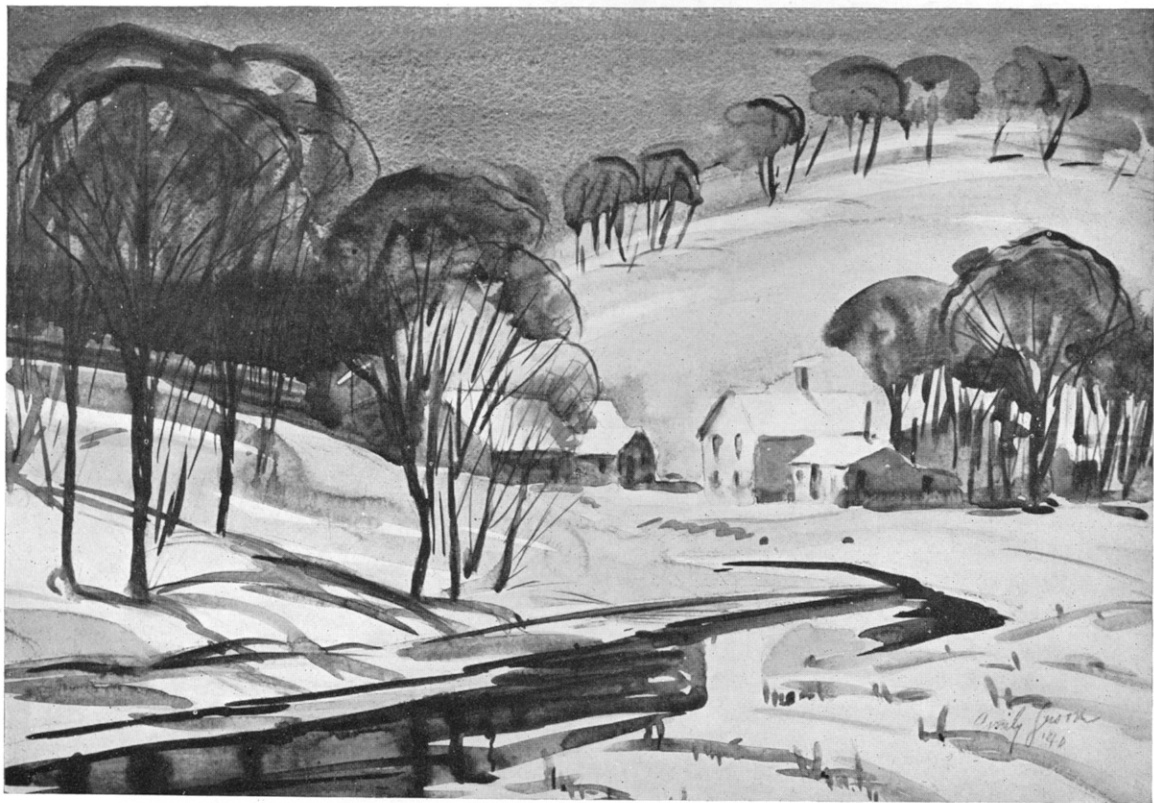
SINCE the rise of a national consciousness in the pictorial arts in the United States, with the resultant surge of regionalism that burst forth ten years ago in the work of Benton, Curry and Wood, there have arisen throughout the country many active art-producing communities. One of the most active of these is the art community of Wisconsin, centering in Milwaukee. The six painters chosen for discussion in this article are all living and practising their craft in Milwaukee to-day; they have each achieved considerable local recognition; many of their works are publicly and privately owned; several have exhibited widely throughout the country, and in a number of instances have won national awards. These six are by no means the only painters of merit in this community. I have chosen them for three reasons; they have divergent points of view; they are representative of the work that is being produced here, and of the three art training centres in Milwaukee, the Layton Art School and the Art Departments of Milwaukee Downer

College and the State Teachers' College; and thirdly (my principal consideration), each of the six is a mature artist.

## *Emily Groom (1876- )*

Emily Groom is a conservative painter, who with sound training and perseverance has achieved an ever-increasing freedom of technique. Her training includes study under Vanderpool at the Art Institute of Chicago, continued in Boston under the well-known trio, Tarbell, Benson and Hale. In 1909 she received finishing touches of instruction from the celebrated English painter, Sir Frank Brangwyn, R.A., in London, and the following summer she spent on the island of Hoy in the Orkneys. To-day, 35 years after, Miss Groom is painting from sketches and resurrected memories views of Hoy, with its watery distances and mistladen atmosphere. From the collector's point of view, however, she is best known for her water-colours of bowls of petunias, which she paints because "they

*Emily Groom. Boscobel (Water-colour). Boscobel is a small town on the Wisconsin River, near the Mississippi: one of the most picturesque sections of Wisconsin*



## SIX WISCONSIN PAINTERS

Alfred Sessler. "Concessionaire" (Oil). This painting is typical of Sessler's frequent humorous strain



and working with him. The result is a pictorial panorama of this important activity on the Great Lakes in a rich variety of media—lithography, etching, woodcut, oil and water-colour.

Gerrit V. Sinclair (1890– )

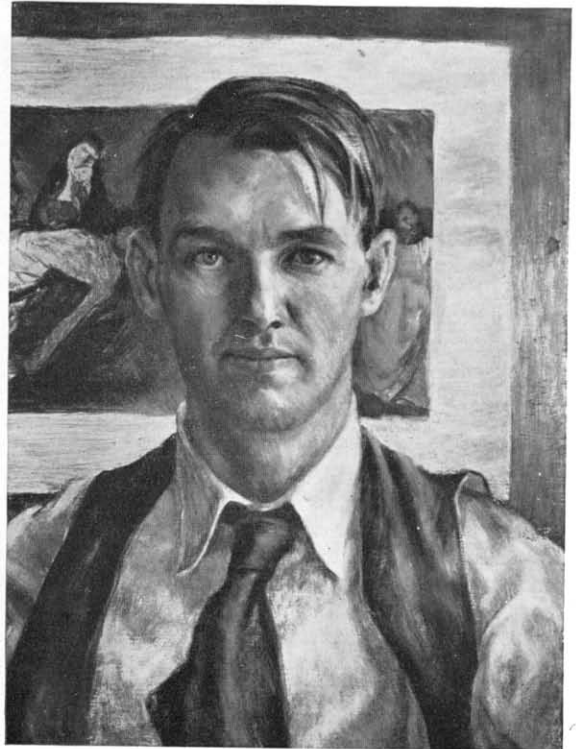
The visual aspect of Wisconsin has many very interesting and beautiful facets. It is a state of busy industry and one of the principal vacation lands of the Union. For a pictorial cross-section of the state, from a healthy, objective point of view, one could scarcely do better than consider the art of Gerrit V. Sinclair. In subject-matter he is probably the most typical painter of the state; his choice is catholic; for long he has painted our dairy farm lands, our lakeside beaches, our city streets and duplex dwellings, our harbours and ports with weather-beaten shacks and flocks of screaming gulls; for long he has painted these familiar, everyday sights with a genuine enthusiasm, always peopling them, and often bringing in touches of his own good humour.

His early work, in pure oil, was low in key with limited value range. More recently he has painted and become known for his muted palette, to produce a feeling for mood. To-day, using tempera straight, he has heightened his palette, and shows his ever-scrupulous care in building up a subject from abstract form.

are a beautiful subject, close at hand". She has also exercised her sensitive objectivity in painting many of the most picturesque localities in the United States and Europe, and in recent years has taken to painting the Wisconsin countryside with a sureness of water-colour handling and a breadth of composition that achieves distinction.

Robert von Neumann (1888– )

It would be well for the field of creative expression if there were more painters like Robert von Neumann. Vigorous of physique, he is a man of action, a painter of human activity; his theme, the fishing life on Lake Michigan; his compositions cut by strong diagonals and built up in massive forms. His choice of subject-matter is, as it were, in his blood, for he was born in Rostock, Germany, 12 kilometres from the "wild Baltic strand", where as a boy he got his first longings to record seafaring life. Not a painter of individuals, he is rather the painter of a type, the type of professional freshwater fisherman, who can be seen at five o'clock of a morning, winter and summer, putting out from Great Lakes harbours. To equip himself to paint this theme with authority he frequents the haunts of the fisherman to absorb the flavour of his life by living



Charles W. Thwaites. "Self-portrait with Pieta". The Pieta in the background is the famous painting from Villeneuve-lès-Avignon. The medium, maroger, a variant of oil used here is also used by several local painters



Robert von Neumann. "Great Lakes Fishermen" (Oil). This painting has obviously been influenced by Rubens' "Miraculous Draught of Fishes" at Malines

Charles W. Thwaites (1904- )

It has ever been the case that the true artist has been a profound student of his medium. Charles Thwaites is such a painter. His close analysis of pigment, his study of colour and glazing, his penetrating scrutiny of the human face, have made him the leading portrait painter in Wisconsin to-day.

To prepare himself for a portrait painting career, Thwaites began and has continued to paint heads closest to hand; he has made innumerable self-portraits and portraits of his wife. Besides these he has painted a number of local celebrities. Thwaites' method is to study the head from many angles and his medium has ranged from pure oil technique to maroger, which is a variant of oil. Lately, within the past few months, he has taken to painting the human eye, and again following the most available expedient has been making oil studies of his own eyes and those of his wife. These eye studies are beautiful, with the fluidity and rich colour harmony of a Renoir, a master whom Thwaites particularly admires.

Alfred Sessler (1909- )

One of the rarest ingredients in the field of art is that of humour. There is a painter in Wisconsin to-day, Alfred Sessler, who quite frankly says that he looks at life and people from a satirical angle, and often expresses his sharp, stinging observations with a rare good humour. Sessler is largely self-taught. Be it said, however, for a short time he had an instructor who has been called the "Father of Wisconsin Painters", Gustav Moeller. Sessler's work is unique; his paintings are small; they are comparatively few in number, but they possess an artistry, a truly fine sense of colour, a consistency in handling, and a social commentary that make his works very desirable.

Ruth Grotenrath (1912- )

Ruth Grotenrath is a splendid example of the type of artist to whom may be applied the expression, "In small proportions we just beauties see". Like Chardin of eighteenth-century France, she is a painter's painter, and her usual subject is still-life, but whether it be an

Ruth Grotenrath.

*"Sea Perch" (Oil)*

apple bough, a self-portrait, or a decorative panel, she endows it with distinction. She has a boldness of attack given to or acquired by few; her treatment of form is sculptural (although, strangely enough, she has had little to do with sculpture); she has an interesting, asymmetric sense of composition, and her colour is rich and subtle. In Peyton Boswell's "Modern American Painting" she would be classified as an exponent of "Pure Art".

Ruth Grotenrath is one-half of a fine painting team. Her husband, Schomer Lichtner, is also a painter of ability. His strongly accented style has had an influence upon his wife, notably in her most recent of three murals for the government, for the Section of Fine Arts. From an abstract point of view, the last of these three murals is bold in design, big in conception and free in handling. It will provide, eventually, a fine example of art under Government sponsorship.



Below: Gerrit V. Sinclair. *"Winter Mail" (Tempera)*. (Collection of Bruno B. Bitker). This painting is typical in subject-matter of Central Wisconsin





# CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

THE STUDIO. JANUARY 1946. Vol. 131. No. 634.

Edited by Geoffrey Holme

## ARTICLES

BRITISH FIGURE PAINTING. By Iain Macnab, R.O.I., R.E.	1
STEPHEN GOODEN, A.R.A., R.E. By Campbell Dodgson, C.B.E., M.A.	10
ARTS AND CRAFTS IN THE NETHERLANDS. By Paul Bromberg	15
SIX WISCONSIN PAINTERS. By Samuel N. Manierre	20
DAVID BOMBERG. By Bryan Robertson	24
JOHN MANSBRIDGE. By James Laver	26
LONDON COMMENTARY. By Cora Gordon	29
BOOK REVIEWS	32

## SUPPLEMENTS

MARGUERITE-PAULINE. By W. Russell Flint, R.A., P.R.W.S.	1
SEATED NUDE. By P. Wilson Steer, O.M.	4
THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS. By William Blake	8
THE BATHER. By William Etty	9

## NEXT ISSUE

### THE NATIONAL ART-COLLECTIONS FUND

By SIR ROBERT WITT, C.B.E., D.LITT., F.S.A.  
(Past Chairman of the Fund)

## RECENT IMPORTANT ARTICLES

FRENCH APPLIED ART DURING THE OCCUPATION (DECEMBER). THE CAMDEN TOWN GROUP. BY CHARLES GINNER, A.R.A., R.W.S. (NOVEMBER). THE NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND. BY STANLEY CURSITER, R.S.A. (OCTOBER). THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF PORTRAIT PAINTERS. BY HERBERT A. OLIVIER, R.I. (SEPTEMBER). SPORTSMEN'S PICTURES. BY GUY PAGET (AUGUST). ARTISTS IN WAR AND PEACE. BY HOLGER CAHILL (JULY). *Most of these issues are entirely out of print.*

Copyright in all works reproduced in "The Studio" is strictly reserved.

**Conditions of Sale and Supply.** This periodical is sold subject to the following conditions: That it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price of Two Shillings and Sixpence; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorized cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter.

*The Editor is always glad to consider proposals for editorial contributions to this magazine, but a letter outlining the nature of the contribution proposed, accompanied, where possible, by photographs of the illustrations suggested, is advisable in the first instance to avoid unnecessary disappointment.*

*Original works of art should never be sent without first obtaining the approval of the Editor.*

*For the purposes of reproduction, glossy photographs are preferable, and contributors are reminded that good objects can be easily ruined for reproduction purposes by poor photography.*

*No responsibility of any kind can be accepted for loss of or damage to material of any description, nor for loss or damage to fragile articles.*

*The sender's name and address should be clearly marked on the back of each photograph, print, drawing or other article submitted for approval and be accompanied by return postage.*

**Subscription Rates** (post free) 30s. Bound volume (six issues) 17s. 6d. Canada. The Musson Book Co., 480-486 University Avenue, Toronto, 30s. post free. U.S.A. The Studio Publications Inc., 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City. 6.00 A subscription is the best way of ensuring continuity, but any change of address must be notified at least four weeks before publication.

*"The Studio" may normally be ordered through any newspaper or bookseller throughout the world.*

**Advertisement Rates.** Advertisers are reminded that the readers of "The Studio" are cultured people interested in products of all kinds which are of aesthetic value. Rates for Display Advertising may be obtained on application to the Advertisement Manager, The Studio, 66 Chandos Place, London, W.C.2 (Temple Bar 1915).

*Miscellaneous advertisements, which must be prepaid, 12s. 6d. for the first 30 words and 2d. per word after.*

*No packages should be sent to "The Studio" in response to advertisers' announcements, but should be addressed direct to the advertiser. While every precaution is taken, the Proprietors of "The Studio" cannot accept responsibility for services or offers contained in any advertisement appearing in their columns, or for loss of or damage to any material sent in response to advertisers' announcements.*

FOUNDED IN 1893

THE

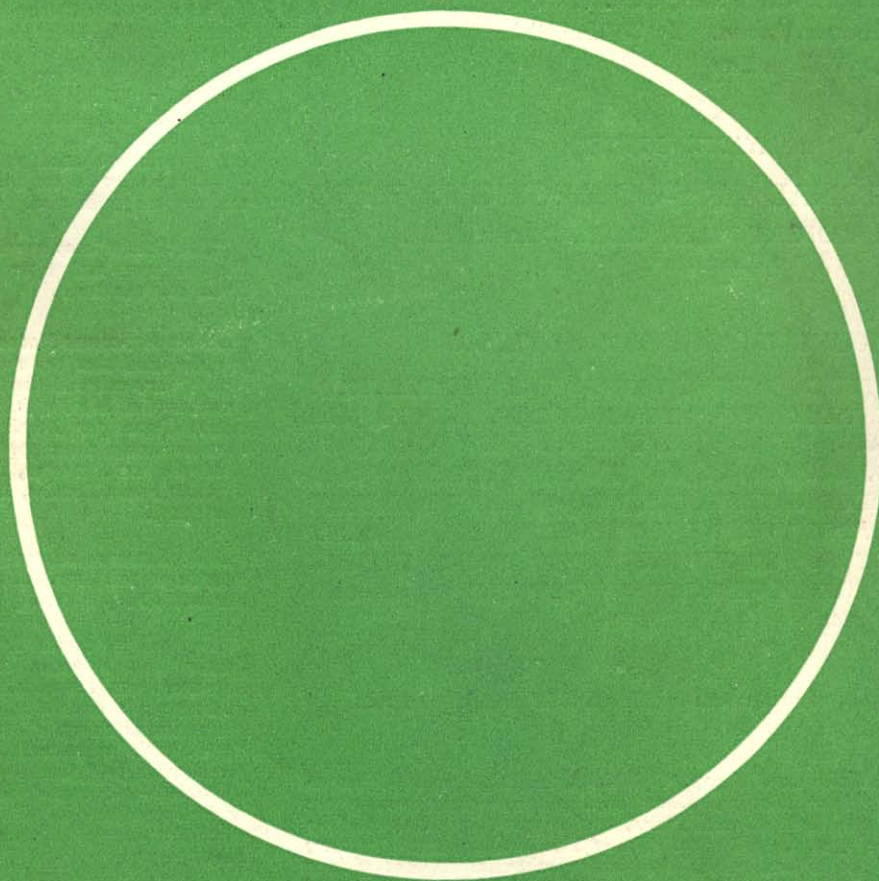
# STUDIO

BRITISH FIGURE PAINTING

By IAIN MACNAB, R.O.I., R.E.

STEPHEN GOODEN, A.R.A., R.E.

By CAMPBELL DODGSON, C.B.E., M.A.



JANUARY 1946

TWO AND SIX NET

Vol. 131. No. 634

STUDIO

THE STUDIO

STUDIO

JANUARY 1946