

Loos, Walter (March 28, 1887 - July 13, 1966)

Born in Switzerland, Walter Loos arrived in Saskatchewan in 1907 and was employed at a number of jobs. He began as a homesteader at Belle Plaine, was hired by the Moose Jaw sheriff's office in 1912, occasionally taught art classes and spent considerable time painting. Evidently Loos studied art before leaving Europe; the only clue to his education is a 1917 reference to an unnamed institution in Paris.

Some time during Loos' residency in Moose Jaw, he sold a series of landscapes of A.H. Gibbard, the city's Head Librarian. Loos departed for Montana in 1922 when he was hired by the Great Northern Railway to paint a comprehensive inventory of Glacier Park's wild flowers. He then moved to San Francisco, where he spent thirty-two years as an antique dealer. At various times he owned his own antique business and maintained a studio. He moved to Sebastopol, Calif., in 1956 and died there ten years later.

Relatively little is known of about the life of Walter Loos, but the works he left behind — particularly his Saskatchewan landscapes — are memorable and distinctive in style. They evoke a time when the land was just beginning to be divided and much of it was unbroken. He painted the landscapes of many different areas in Southern Saskatchewan: Fife Lake, Leeville, Wood Mountain, Willow Bunch, and Poplar Creek.

In 1957, when Gibbard's collection was returned to the Moose Jaw Library for permanent display, the Moose Jaw Times-Herald described the paintings: they were "characterized by beautiful prairie skies and clear fresh colors. Mr. Loos' gentle and delicate strokes have made the oils appear more like watercolor than the usually accepted oil paintings" (26 June 1957). In an article discussing Loos' works in 1968, the Moose Jaw Times-Herald describes the paintings as "delicate and precise creations characterized by vivid prairie skies and clear fresh colors [...] The oils give the impression of being able to see for miles. His use of detail and special pink shades succeed in giving his paintings a distinctive style" (qtd. in MacDonald 897).

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1924 San Francisco Art Association, San Francisco, California, USA

1968 Travelling exhibition organized by the Saskatchewan Arts Board

SELECTED WORKS IN COLLECTIONS

Moose Jaw Museum and Art Gallery, Moose Jaw, SK

Prairie Fire near Leeville, 1908

Watercolour on paper

28.3 x 39.1 cm

9.69.21.1

Homesteaders Near Old Wives

Watercolour on paper

18.3 x 28.0 cm

9.69.21.2

Hillside in Spring Time

Oil on canvas

31.2 x 47.1

9.69.21.3

Stooks, Southern Saskatchewan

Oil on board

31.1 x 46.8 cm

9.69.21.4

Lost Child Creek

Acrylic on board

30.9 x 47.0 cm

9.69.21.5

Irishman's Sod Shanty

Oil on canvas

31.0 x 46.9 cm

9.69.21.6

Sugarloaf Hill, Poplar Creek, South Saskatchewan

Oil on board

31.0 x 47.1 cm

9.69.21.7

The Prairie Home, Afterglow

Oil on canvas

31.0 x 47.0 cm

9.69.21.8

Coulee Near Willow Bunch

Oil on board

30.9 x 46.9 cm

9.69.21.9

Autumn in Wood Mountain

Oil on board

31.1 x 47.0 cm

9.69.21.10

Ravine Near Wood Mountain

Oil on board

31.0 x 47.0

9.69.21.11

The Waterhole, Evening

Oil on board

31.1 x 46.9 cm
9.69.21.12

Haze Over Skunk Butte

Oil on board
30.9 x 46.0 cm
9.69.21.13

Hungarian Settler's First Home [Near Fife Lake, Saskatchewan]

Oil on canvas
31.1 x 46.9 cm
9.69.21.14

Mountain Lilies

Oil on canvas
28.5 x 22.4 cm
9.69.21.15

Arnica

Oil on academy board
28.4 x 22.3 cm
9.69.21.16

Untitled [Bouquet of Flowers]

Oil on academy board
22.6 x 18.1
9.69.21.17

Prairie Cactus

Oil on academy board
22.6 x 18.2 cm
9.69.21.18

Prairie Crocus

Oil on academy board
22.7 x 18.2 cm
9.69.21.19

Chokecherries and Dogwood

Oil on academy board
30.7 x 24.3 cm
9.69.21.20

Lake Of ... (Illegible)

Oil on canvas
25.4 x 35.9 cm

9.78.21.1

Untitled [Landscape], 1900
Watercolour on paper
16.9 x 24.9 cm
9.88.18.1

Untitled [Landscape], 1900
Watercolour on paper
22.9 x 16.9 cm
9.88.19.1

WORKS CITED

"Loos' Delicate Landscapes Return As Permanent Gift." Moose Jaw Times-Herald 26 June 1957: 15.

MacDonald, Colin S., ed. "Loos, Walter." A Dictionary of Canadian Artists: Volume 4. Ottawa: Canadian Paperbacks Publishing, 1974.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Moose Jaw Has Clever Artist." Moose Jaw Times-Herald 23 Dec. 1912: 9.