



Blanche Lazzell: The Life and Work of an American Modernist

Blanche Lazzell

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Modern Maven: Blanche Lazzell (1878—1956) didn't have the problem others did with merging the two distinctly different facets of her identity. The quiet girl, who was partially deaf and enormously proud of the traditional values she was raised with in a rural West Virginia log cabin, evolved into an independent and original modern artist with a lifelong passion for abstract expression. Early on, she met her goal of living as a working artist in Paris, and later, was nurtured by the artistic community in her adopted home of Provincetown, Massachusetts, where she created a prolific series of white-line woodblock prints that were some of the first examples of abstract art in America. Like many other artists of her day, Lazzell did not see recognition for her work; that came well after her death, an effort that will be aided by this handsome, new book devoted to her significant contributions to modernism.

In *Blanche Lazzell: The Life and Work of an American Modernist* (West Virginia University Press, 200 color illustrations and more than 50 color plates, 338 pages, hardcover, \$75.00, 0-937058-84-X), editors Robert Bridges, Kristina Olson, and Janet Snyder craft an extensively detailed and richly illustrated study of Lazzell's work and the scope of her legacy in American abstract art. Her long, varied career and restless, inventive experimentation with different media are reflected in the comprehensive group of artworks, accompanying essays, photographs, and travel diaries assembled. She brought cubism to hooked rugs, infused printmaking with color-drenched abstraction, and folded naturalistic detailing into dreamy, surreal landscapes; her art, much like her life, was a homogenous blend of compatible contradictions and personal paradoxes.

A tribute to a singular talent that is as distinctive and multi-faceted as her work.

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