

PRESS RELEASE
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**KENTUCKY MUSEUM
OF ART AND CRAFT**

For Immediate Release
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A Research Exhibition Featuring "Discovered" Kentucky Painter C.C. Coyle at the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft

Louisville, KY - May 22, 2013 - The Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft (KMAC) presents a special research exhibition of paintings by Kentucky native **C.C. Coyle** on loan from the Berea College Art Collection. **Cosmic Nature: Paintings by C.C. Coyle** consists of 24 oil paintings and will be on view in the second floor gallery **through June 23rd**. It is the first exhibition of Coyle's work to be shown outside of Berea. KMAC seeks to uncover more information about these works as well as piece together a more complete history of the artist.

History

Carlos Cortez Coyle (1871-1962) was a self-taught painter who spent the early part of his life in Dreyfus, Kentucky. In 1889, he briefly attended Berea Foundation School (now Berea College) where he was introduced to Appalachian arts and crafts through teacher and Director of Berea's Fireside Industries Jennie Lester Hill. Early drawings of birds, plumes, feathers and goddesses are found in an old school diary that he kept while attending the school. Coyle left Berea before graduating for reasons unknown and moved to Florida and then to Canada in an attempt to make a living in farming. Drought caused him to make a career change into the building trade, which came to a close during World War I. After the war, Coyle moved to San Francisco to begin his trade again, but was unsuccessful due to the Great Depression. In 1929, at the age of 60, Coyle took up oil painting and completed over a hundred works between 1929 and 1942.

In 1942, prompted by his failing health, Coyle paid to ship four crates from San Francisco to Berea College containing 47 paintings, 35 drawings and an illustrative diary of his work. Shortly after the unannounced shipment to Berea College, Coyle sent a letter of intent stating, "I am resolved to give my art to the land of my birth where I played and spent most of my youth." The paintings were left crated and put into storage where they remained until 1960 when Berea College art professor Thomas Fern discovered the work and held Coyle's first exhibition. The exhibit received some public recognition through an article written for the Louisville Courier Journal Magazine by then arts critic William Mootz. Through inquiries by Berea Art Department staff, they found Coyle who at 88 was suffering from blindness and residing in Leesburg, FL. He replied with a letter of thanks to the school for showing his work in the art gallery. Carlos Cortez Coyle died two years later in 1962. He was 90.

Works

C.C. Coyle's paintings are a collection representing Kentucky and West Coast landscape memories ranging in themes of nature, motherhood, astronomy, industrial progress, the passage of time and spirituality. The bulk of his work was made in the 1930's in the time frame of President Roosevelt's Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration and the Surrealism movement. Many of his paintings include multiple images in one composition creating a narrative story line that begs the viewer to decode.

Categorizing C.C. Coyle in an art historical context is challenging. He is self-taught but uses proportion and

realistic depth that defies the Folk Art label. His sentimental imagery of popular culture and knowledge of fine art contradicts being a "visionary" painter, which is work that is religious in theme and based on dreams, visions or voices. Coyle's boldness of color and brushstroke and lack of conventional restraints is comparable to 20th Century naïve artists.

Included in the exhibit is an extensive family tree Coyle created in 1944 tracing his lineage back to the Coyle's that served in the American Revolutionary War. C.C. Coyle went to much effort to compile this exhaustive list and states in his written narrative, "I am leaving you this record as a heritage that many of you will refer to with pride and pleasure."

The KMAC exhibition asks viewers to give their impressions of the C.C. Coyle collection. ***Open to Interpretation: The Works of C.C. Coyle*** is presented in the middle of the second floor gallery where participants can write their one to two word impressions of Coyle's work on note cards and affix them to a designated wall.

KMAC looks to position these exceptional works into the larger context of American Art from the 20th century.



Carlos Cortez Coyle. *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rules the World*, 1935, Oil on Canvas, 88 x 48 in.

Exhibits Currently On View

- [Kentuckiana Sublime, Harlan Hubbard and New Perspectives on Nature](#), March 14 through June 9, 2013
- [Bluegrass Bourbon: By the Bottle/By the Ounce](#). Opening April 5th. Runs through June 16th.

Upcoming Events

- Curator Talk. "Kentuckiana Sublime: Harlan Hubbard and New Perspectives on Nature" by Jessica K. Whitehead. Saturday, June 8 at 1pm.

- 7 Borders. An exhibition featuring artists from Kentucky's seven border states - Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Opens June 29.

Summer Camp Spots Available

- KidArt Camp for grades K-5
- Clay Camp for grades K-5
- Art Week at Blackacre Nature Preserve for grades 6-8

More info and online registration:

www.kentuckyarts.org/education-camps

About the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft

The Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft is located at 715 West Main Street in downtown Louisville and provides a platform to explore materials, techniques, and artistic expression. The Museum's goal is to educate and inspire while promoting a better understanding of art and craft through exhibitions, collaborations, outreach and the permanent collection. The Museum forges alliances within Kentucky, regionally, nationally, and internationally in order to participate in a broader conversation about art and its role in society. For more information, visit www.kmacmuseum.org or call (502) 589-0102.

Hours: Tues.- Sat. 10am-5pm, Sun. 11am-5pm. The museum is closed on Mondays.

Admission: \$6 for adults/free for 18 under; \$5 for military and senior citizens; free for students (with id), \$5 for groups of 10 or more.

The Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft is generously sponsored by:

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