

Phoenix Art Museum

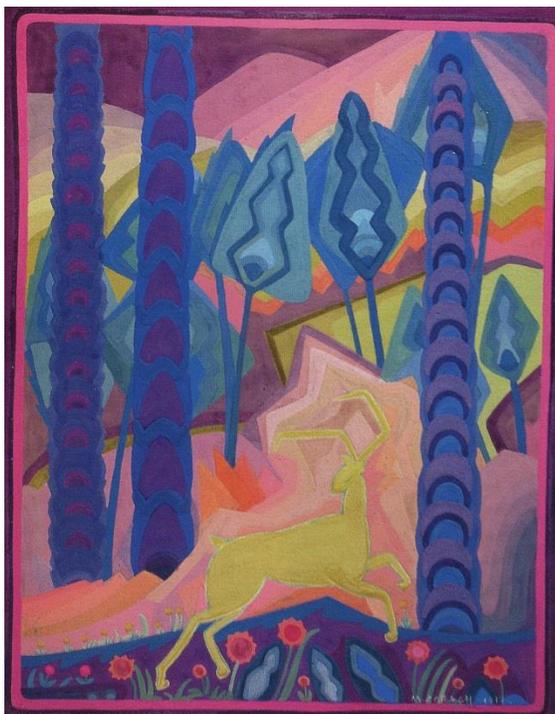
News Release

MEDIA CONTACT:

Margaree Bigler Public Relations and Digital Communications Manager
602.257.2105 | margaree.bigler@phxart.org

Phoenix Art Museum acquires painting by early American modernist, Marguerite Zorach

Deer in the Forest (1914) is the Museum's first acquisition funded by the Ballinger American Art Fund and the first item in the collection by an influential figure in American modernist painting.



Marguerite Zorach, *Deer in the Forest*, 1914. Gouache on paperboard. Purchased with funds from the James K. Ballinger American Art and Education Fund.

PHOENIX (January 25, 2018) – Phoenix Art Museum has purchased its first acquisition from the James K. Ballinger American Art and Education Fund, established in honor of director emeritus Jim Ballinger to strengthen the Museum's collection of American art made before 1950. *Deer in the Forest* is a painting from 1914 by Marguerite Zorach, who was an early exponent of modernism in the United States. This acquisition represents a significant addition to the Museum's holdings of American art, which has historically lacked equitable representation of women artists.

"We're excited about welcoming the first acquisition from the Ballinger Fund into our collection," said Amada Cruz, the Sybil Harrington Director and CEO of Phoenix Art Museum. "Acquiring this work by an important American modernist is an excellent way to inaugurate the use of this fund and honor Mr. Ballinger, who was an instrumental advocate for the American art that is central to our Museum and our cultural history, which we're dedicated to sharing with our visitors."

Born in Santa Rosa, California, Marguerite Zorach (née Thompson) grew up in Fresno. In 1908, she left Stanford University for Paris to study art and live with an aunt who knew Gertrude Stein and belonged to the avant-garde art community. After she had been exposed to Post-Impressionism, the work of Henri Matisse, and other Fauvist painters, she quickly adopted the Fauves' bold colors and painterly techniques. In 1911, she traveled through Egypt, Palestine, India, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, China, Korea, and Hong Kong with her aunt, who

wanted Zorach to maintain a worldly perspective before she returned to the United States. In 1912, Zorach married fellow American artist William Zorach, whom she had met in Paris as a student, and they settled in Greenwich Village, New York's center of avant-garde activity. Throughout her life, Zorach continued to paint while also working in embroidery, which she transformed into an avant-garde art form. She received four commissions under the New Deal to produce murals in three post offices and one courthouse.

Zorach painted *Deer in the Forest* in 1914, one year after New York's landmark Armory Show, which was the United States' first large-scale introduction to the European avant-garde as well as the work of many American painters, including Zorach. *Deer in the Forest* exemplifies how quickly and wholeheartedly Zorach embraced the latest European styles. The painting's intense colors and dynamic composition put the artist at the forefront of American modernism. Her husband once said in reference to her work, "I just couldn't understand why such a nice girl would paint such wild pictures." Zorach's opinion of her own work was more straightforward: "It does not take a big canvas to express a big idea."

"Marguerite's *Deer in the Forest* strengthens our holdings of American women modernists, including Georgia O'Keeffe, Blanche Lazzell, Aline Meyer Liebman, Alice Trumbull Mason, Florine Stettheimer, Helen Torr and Agnes Pelton," said Betsy

Fahlman, the Museum's adjunct curator of American art. "Few Americans painted in such a strongly Fauvist style as did Zorach, and she was an instrumental figure in this exciting period of change of American artists."

Deer in the Forest will be on view in the Museum beginning fall 2018. It is the Museum's first acquisition with funds provided by the James K. Ballinger American Art and Education Fund, which was established in 2015 for the purpose of strengthening the Museum's holdings of American Art produced before 1950. The Museum's collection features four works by (1915-1917) by William Zorach.

About Phoenix Art Museum

Phoenix Art Museum has provided access to visual arts and educational programs in Arizona for more than 50 years and is the largest art museum in the Southwestern United States. Critically acclaimed national and international exhibitions are shown alongside the Museum's permanent collection of more than 18,000 works of American, Asian, European, Latin American, Western American, modern and contemporary art, and fashion design. The Museum also presents festivals, a comprehensive film program, live performances and educational programs designed to enlighten, entertain and stimulate visitors of all ages. Visitors also enjoy vibrant photography exhibitions through the Museum's landmark partnership with the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. To learn more about Phoenix Art Museum, visit phxart.org, or call the 24-hour recorded information line at 602.257.1222.

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