

Pearl Blauvelt

Born 1893, Pennsylvania; died 1987.

A self-taught American artist of Dutch ancestry, Pearl Blauvelt's entire body of work — a remarkable cache of drawings in graphite and colored pencil on ruled notebook paper — was discovered years after her death in a wooden box in her abandoned former home in northeastern Pennsylvania. Now regarded as an emblematic outsider artist, Blauvelt's images of people strolling along country lanes, horse-drawn carriages, railways tracks, bank-notes, houses, furniture, and women's undergarments, which she often labeled with precision and care, serve as the imaginative recollections of a woman who lived a humble life on the margins of mainstream society.

The artist's determination to accurately capture the proportions, shapes, and surface textures of her varied subjects with only the drawing materials available in her limited surroundings evokes a somewhat child-like approach. At the same time Blauvelt's pictures are also marked by unexpected sophistication as she exaggerates the details of certain subjects or accentuates the sculptural qualities of others. In creating her neatly organized compositions, she often assigns biblical references to mundane events, and refers to images of products reproduced in mid-century mail-order catalogs.

Blauvelt's Dutch ancestors settled in the Hudson Valley, north of New York City, and helped found the First Dutch Reformed Church in that region in the late 1600s. At some point in the early decades of the 20th century, the artist moved with her father to a house in a small town in northeastern Pennsylvania that was heated by a coal stove and had a pump in the kitchen that supplied water from a well in the backyard. This is where she spent most of her adult life. In the 1970s, she was moved to a mental facility outside of Scranton where she continued to draw until her death in 1987.

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020

Pearl Blauvelt, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2018

Pearl Blauvelt Drawings, Kerry Schuss, New York

2013

Jennifer Levonian and Pearl Blauvelt, Adams and Ollman, Portland

Pearl Blauvelt and Les LeVeque, Kerry Schuss, New York

2009

Pearl Blauvelt - Ele D'Artagnan, Kerry Schuss, New York

2007

Pearl Blauvelt - McDermott & McGough, curated by Bob Nickas, Kerry Schuss, New York

2005

Pearl Blauvelt: Home Sweet Home, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan (Wisconsin)

2003

Pearl Blauvelt - Drawings, KS Art, New York

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2025

MPM/IRL, mepaintsme, New York

2024

Unaccompanied Conversations, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York

Something Familiar, Shelter Gallery, New York

2020

An Alternative Canon: Art Dealers Collecting Outsider Art, curated by Paul Laster, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY

2019

Memory Palaces: Inside the Collection of Audrey B. Heckler, American Folk Art Museum, New York

2018

Leben in Art Brut: Sammlung Hannah Rieger, Bildraum Bodensee, Bregenz

Pearl Blauvelt / Aleana Egan, Mary Mary, Glasgow

2014

Half Drop, Kerry Schuss, New York

2010

The Museum of Everything, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin

2009

Compass in Hand: Selections from The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection, Museum of Modern Art, New York

2008

Castle in Context, Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Philadelphia

Glossolalia: Languages of Drawings, Museum of Modern Art, New York

2005

Art on Paper, Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro (North Carolina)

2004

Colored Pencil, KS Art, New York

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Museum of Everything, London

Museum of Modern Art, New York

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Yau, John, "A Bird's-Eye View of Heaven," *Hyperallergic*, May 6, 2014.

The Museum of Everything, exhibition catalogue, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli & Electa, Turin/Milan, 2010.

Compass in Hand: Selections from The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2009.

"Review," *New Yorker*, July 2, 2007.

Pearl Blauvelt: Home Sweet Home, exhibition catalogue, John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan (Wisconsin), 2005.

Rexer, Lyle, *How to Look at Outsider Art*, Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2004.

Corrigan, Dennis and Donna, "The Village Witch," *Raw Vision*, No. 39, 2003.

Johnson, Ken, "Art in Review," *New York Times*, January 24, 2003.

Pederson, Victoria, "A Venue for the Visionary," *Art & Auction*, February 2003.

"Review," *New Yorker*, March 10, 2003.