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A

Alfred H. Maurer: Aestheticism to Modernism, 1897-1916

by

Stacey Beth Epstein

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The
City University of New York**

2003

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Introduction

The American painter Alfred H. Maurer (1868-1932) created a dynamic body of work that bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and spanned a period stretching from Aestheticism to modernism. He launched his career with elegant *fin-de-siècle* figure studies that garnered critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic and rose to prominence as a cosmopolitan painter of genteel female subjects. While creating paintings in this vein, Maurer also produced captivating genre portrayals of contemporary life executed in a Realist mode. He demonstrated great facility working in these two aesthetics, and though perfectly poised for continued success with his Whistler-inspired imagery, Maurer abandoned his more traditional work to chart a modernist course.

By 1907 Maurer had begun to make seminal contributions to American modernism, a field that was then in its embryonic stages. As this dissertation demonstrates, he went on to become one of the earliest American artists to embrace the promise of vanguard art and emerged as arguably the most accomplished American to create Fauve work. Maurer played an active role in the cross-fertilization of modern art between France and America, and he served as an important link between New York and

Paris art circles, furnishing his fellow countrymen with invaluable first-hand knowledge of pre-World War I Parisian art.

Despite the significance of Maurer's achievements, he has generally been viewed as a minor figure within the trajectory of American art. His pre-modern contributions have been eclipsed by those of more popular nineteenth-century artists, including John Singer Sargent, James McNeill Whistler, William Merritt Chase, and Thomas Eakins. Likewise, his modernist work has been largely overshadowed by that of his twentieth-century contemporaries such as those associated with Alfred Stieglitz's circle like Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove, and John Marin. Although acknowledged in histories of American art, Maurer is generally accorded only a minor note of recognition. The limited information pertaining to him, which primarily focuses on his work as a modernist, is typically recycled from one resource to the next.

Maurer scholarship has been constrained by the fact that there is only a fragmentary body of biographical information available on the artist and a dearth of other primary source material relating to him. Maurer believed it unnecessary to speak about his aesthetic aims. He was not an avid letter writer and any extent journals he may have maintained have yet to be located. Scattered personal recollections by those who knew him, and

contemporary exhibition reviews continue to offer the most valuable clues about Maurer's life and art.

Over the years there has been very little in the way of scholarship on Maurer. Two of the primary research resources are Elizabeth McCausland's 1951 biography and Sheldon Reich's 1973 Maurer retrospective exhibition catalogue essay. Although informative, these publications were written decades ago and do not reflect the many advances in late nineteenth-century American art studies and early American modernist scholarship.¹ Both McCausland and Reich mainly offer broad overviews of Maurer's life and professional career. Within their respective investigations, however, they essentially gloss over Maurer's pre-modern work, which they address in little more than a cursory fashion. While they acknowledged Maurer's gifts as a modernist, neither offered a comprehensive account of his vanguard contributions, nor fully recognized his role in shaping early American modernism.

¹ Since McCausland's 1951 biography and Reich's 1973 essay on Maurer there has been a great deal of new scholarship in the field of American art that has provided considerable new information in which to better understand Maurer's contributions. Elizabeth McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography of America's First Modern Painter (New York: A. A. Wyn, Inc., published for the Walker Art Center, 1951); Sheldon Reich, A. H. Maurer, 1868-1932 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973).

Beyond an insightful article by Nick Madormo in 1983 on Maurer's genre paintings executed around the turn of the century,² the first intensive study of Maurer since the 1970s was made by the present author in conjunction with the 1999 exhibition "Alfred Maurer: Aestheticism to Modernism."³ The catalogue essay for the exhibition was an outgrowth of research conducted for this dissertation. It offered a general reappraisal of Maurer's contributions from 1897 to 1932, in contrast to this study, which provides a more focused examination of Maurer's first mature works.

The present dissertation, then, represents the first concentrated scholarly assessment of Maurer's early and mid career. It serves as a repository of information about the artist's production between the years 1897 and 1916, during which time Maurer made the transition from nineteenth-century figurative artist to twentieth-century vanguard modernist. Organized in a catalogue raisonné-like fashion, this study offers the most comprehensive assemblage of Maurer's early paintings, among them many previously unknown works. It aims to provide a coherent narrative of Maurer's imagery by situating it within the matrix of late-nineteenth and

² Nick Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment," The American Art Journal 15 (Winter 1983).

³ Alfred H. Maurer: Aestheticism to Modernism. Essay by Stacey Epstein (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries, 1999). It should be noted that a number of the dates offered for works included in this exhibition have been revised in this dissertation to reflect new findings since the exhibition catalogue was written.

early twentieth-century art historical developments. It does so by discussing the aesthetic currents in which Maurer operated and by exploring the artistic, cultural, and historical issues that framed the production of his art during the period under consideration.

The circumscribed dates of this study are 1897 to 1916. The first date represents the year in which Maurer completed his training at the National Academy of Design and embarked on a trip to Paris that ultimately became a seventeen-year sojourn abroad. The second date, two years after Maurer's return to the United States, marks the year of the Forum Exhibition of Modern American Art, a critical juncture in the development of American modernism—a field that Maurer was instrumental in establishing through his early modernist endeavors.

The format of this dissertation is roughly chronological and thematic. Chapter one provides a biographical sketch of Maurer's background. It presents new insight into the artist's early experiences at the National Academy of Design, where Maurer received his first formal art training and honed his fine art skills and techniques. It provides elucidating information about Maurer's early years in the French capital where he briefly trained at the Académie Julian and became involved with such organizations as the American Art Association.

Chapter two concentrates on Maurer's early figurative work from roughly 1900 to 1905 when a great deal of the artist's painting activity centered on the portrayal of female subjects. It focuses on the years immediately following the turn of the century, when Maurer was particularly attentive to formal concerns in painting and began to emphasize the importance of pictorial construction and design over verisimilitude and naturalism in his figural compositions. As revealed in this chapter, many of the pictures Maurer executed between 1900 and 1904 reflect his engagement with the art and ideas associated with Aestheticism. These works resonate with a deep respect for the aesthetic principles sanctioned by Whistler, the artist who most fervently championed the cause of art for art's sake. However, as Maurer developed his unique voice as a figure painter he drew progressively more on a composite of sources that included the art of Diego Velázquez, Frans Hals, and Edouard Manet as well as more recent painters such as John Singer Sargent and William Merritt Chase. By approximately 1904-05 Maurer had discovered a new aesthetic direction. The quiet and poetic character of much of his early female imagery had finally given way to more solid, bold and painterly portrayals rendered in a Realist spirit. The new figurative paintings that Maurer produced around this time are explored

in this section in direct relation to contemporaneous examples by Robert Henri, the leading American Realist of the day.

Chapter three provides information pertaining to the genre paintings that Maurer executed from approximately 1900 until 1905, when he worked simultaneously as a figure painter and chronicler of contemporary leisure. This chapter offers a detailed investigation of the artist's genre imagery, a portion of Maurer's oeuvre that has been traditionally overshadowed by focus on his figure studies. As demonstrated in this chapter, Maurer was a prolific painter of modern life who drew upon familiar subjects, including life at the local cafes, at café-concerts, at the beaches, and on the streets. His depictions of contemporary leisure were both rooted in the present and linked as well to themes popularized earlier by such artists as the figurative Impressionists. Maurer's portrayals of modern life are considered in this section in relation to similar themes and motifs celebrated by Robert Henri and his fellow American Realists.

Chapter four examines Maurer's submissions to contemporary exhibitions in both the United States and in Europe, the artist's adopted residence from 1897 to 1901 and 1902 to 1914. Since much of Maurer's early art is known primarily through references in exhibition catalogues, the review of exhibition documents offered in this section yields invaluable

insight into the type of works Maurer produced while he strove to establish himself as a professional artist in the public arena.

Chapter five explores Maurer's transition to modernism. Its focal point is the artist's shift from more traditional figurative and genre painting to modernist imagery rendered in the spirit of Post-Impressionism, and ultimately, Fauvism. Maurer's stylistic conversion is regarded here as an organic transition for the artist, as opposed to viewing it as a radical and abrupt break from the more traditional painting that it preceded. Maurer's involvement within progressive Parisian art circles, particularly his association with Leo and Gertrude Stein, is discussed in this chapter as an important catalyst to his embrace of modernism.

Chapter six seeks to fill the lacunae of information surrounding Maurer's Fauve period by contextualizing his work in relation to Fauve developments by Matisse and his circle, as well considering it in relation to popular artistic, cultural, and philosophical currents. This chapter traces the stylistic development of Maurer's Fauve still lifes, landscapes, and figurative paintings believed to have been executed during the period of 1907-14, when Maurer resided in France. As this section illustrates, it was during this time that Maurer emerged as a leading American practitioner of the Fauve

aesthetic, creating works of distinction that reveal a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the guiding principles of Fauvism.

Chapter seven concentrates on Maurer's involvement in the American art market between 1909 and 1916. It details the artist's association with dealers, including Alfred Stieglitz, and proposes a new perspective on the nature of Maurer's relationship with such collectors as Dr. Albert Barnes. This chapter discusses the artist's participation in a range of exhibitions, including the 1913 Folsom Gallery Exhibition, the 1913 Armory Show, and the 1916 Forum Exhibition. It surveys critical reaction to Maurer's progressive paintings, which were produced during a period when modernist imagery was highly scrutinized.

Finally, the epilogue to this dissertation furnishes a broad overview of Maurer's career between 1917 and 1932. During these years, Maurer expanded his modernist repertoire and produced some of his most enigmatic and radical work. He experimented with various artistic styles and subjects, moving back and forth freely between Cubism, Fauvism, and Expressionism, and created a sort of fusion of these "isms," in highly original paintings. In addition to discussing the various themes Maurer investigated between 1917 and 1932, this section briefly chronicles interest in Maurer's art since his 1932 suicide.

Chapter 1. Early Background

1.1. Family Life

Alfred H. Maurer (1868–1932) was born in New York City on April 21, 1868 to Louis Maurer and Louisa Stein Maurer. Alfred was one of three children. Charles, born in 1862, was six years Alfred's senior and was the eldest of the Maurer siblings. Charles proved to be artistically inclined, like his father, and established a career as a printer and commercial artist, while he pursued his painting interests on the side. The youngest of the Maurer siblings was Eugenia Maurer, whom Alfred referred to as Gene.¹ Eugenia (later Eugenia Maurer Fuerstenberg) was five years younger than Alfred and served as a model for a number of his early figurative studies.² Among those works that portray her is the 1896-97 pastel Eugenia Maurer (fig.1).

Alfred's mother, Louisa Stein Maurer, though born in America, was of German descent. She was the daughter of Jacob Stein, a milkman by trade.

¹ After Alfred's death, Eugenia waged a long campaign to gain recognition for Alfred's work. She provided Elizabeth McCausland with family documents and information for McCausland's brochure for the 1949 Whitney exhibition and for her 1951 biography on the artist. Ms. Fuerstenberg was, however, displeased with McCausland's characterization of Alfred's relationship with his father and wrote in October 1949: "I have received the brochure for the Maurer biography and exhibition and if I were a stranger to the parties involved I would believe that the sketch is a fine expose of a father and son relationship. However, in an effort to accentuate the relationship, there are technical discrepancies which are certain to mislead. . . I desire no publicity for myself and request that you mention me only casually in the biography." Toward the end of her life Eugenia was admitted to the New England Sanitarium in Melrose, Massachusetts. She passed away November 21, 1961. See letter from Eugenia von Fuerstenberg to Elizabeth McCausland, October 5, 1949, in the 1949 Maurer Exhibition File, Whitney Museum of American Art.

² Eugenia apparently modeled for Alfred on numerous occasions. However, it is difficult to assess the precise number of studies he executed of Eugenia since many early works by Maurer remain unlocated.

Louisa was devoted to the domestic sphere, in particular to her children.³

According to one account, she was a woman who “loved people, but for themselves, not for the formality of entertainment.”⁴ Alfred apparently enjoyed a close relationship with his mother. It was one free from the criticism that at times impeded his relationship with his father, Louis.

Louis Maurer, christened Karl Ludwig, hailed from Bieberich, a small German town situated along the Rhine. He was trained in art at the Frankfurt-am-Main Academy and studied with a lithographer as well as with his uncle Marx, who was a painter in Düsseldorf. Louis Maurer’s family immigrated to America in July 1851, and settled in New York City. There Louis established a career working as an artist-lithographer and secured a position with the firm of Currier and Ives.⁵

Louis Maurer was an accomplished lithographer who specialized in genre imagery and depictions of Native American and game subjects. His meticulous working style reflected his finely honed draftsmanship skills. As Edwin C. Hill observed in the New York Sun:

³ Elizabeth McCausland A.H. Maurer: A Biography of America’s First Modern Painter (New York: A.A. Wyn, Inc., published for the Walker Art Center, 1951), p. 39.

⁴ Elizabeth McCausland Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Fra Dana letter, D377, frame 308.

⁵ For a more detailed account on Louis Maurer’s life, see McCausland, A.H. Maurer: A Biography, pp. 34-39.

Mr. Maurer was painstaking in his work, and fine prints resulted. They assumed finally a definite and recognized place in the art of America. While there was nothing subtle about them, there was no pretense, as any one can see for himself by paying a visit to the exhibition at the Old Print Shop. There is never any guessing about the meaning of a Maurer print. The story hits one in the eye, and no Currier & Ives was ever hung upside down or upon its side.⁶

Around 1872 Louis Maurer opened the lithographic printing firm of Heppenheimer and Maurer, which developed into a successful printing business that yielded a comfortable lifestyle for his family. In 1884 Louis retired from business, turned his attention to painting, and took classes with William Merritt Chase at the Gotham Art School in New York. He later traveled west and depicted scenes of American life and painted works of his friend William Frederick Cody, the legendary showman known as Buffalo Bill.

Louis Maurer was a man of many interests. He was an avid reader of science and philosophy, played the flute, and was an equestrian who was instrumental in establishing the New York Riding Club. He lived to be one hundred years old. Prior to his death in 1932, he had the pleasure of witnessing renewed enthusiasm for his work. Louis Maurer was hailed in 1931 as “the oldest artist in America.”⁷

⁶ Edwin Hill of The New York Sun as quoted in “The Oldest Artist in America” (unidentified author), The Literary Digest 108, n. 8 (February 21, 1931), p. 17.

⁷ Ibid.

Alfred's relationship with his father was, by most accounts, strained and complicated. Louis, a conservative artist, approved of Alfred's chosen profession, but took issue with Alfred when he abandoned his more traditional style of painting to work in a modernist vein. Innumerable reports from both family and friends reinforce that Louis openly expressed his disappointment with Alfred's deviation from the working style and figurative subjects that his father sanctioned.⁸ Louis purportedly found little value in his son's more progressive art, and believed that Alfred was wasting his fine talents painting modernist work. While father and son apparently maintained a mostly amicable association, their conflicting views on art had a most decisive impact upon their relationship. Their artistic differences remained unresolved at the time of Louis Maurer's death on July 19, 1932. Just weeks after his father's passing, Alfred hanged himself in the family home where he had resided with his father since 1914.

1.2. Art Education in New York: National Academy of Design

Biographical information pertaining to Alfred Maurer's early years remains rather vague, with the exception of assorted details delineated by

⁸ Many of Maurer's close friends commented on Louis Maurer's disapproval of his son's modernist work. See for example, Fra Dana letter in the McCausland Papers, AAA, D377, frame 305.

Elizabeth McCausland in her biography on the artist. Maurer attended New York's Public School Number 58 until 1884. He left school at the age of sixteen to join the family lithographic printing firm of Heppenheimer and Maurer in Union City, New Jersey. Alfred was gainfully employed at Heppenheimer and Maurer for many years and continued to work in the commercial and graphic arts industry after leaving the family business. In 1894 he joined the New York-based firm of A. Lenhard, where he reportedly earned between \$25 and \$30 a week producing commercial drawings and designing calendars, show cards, and booklets for the lithographic trade. He also painted watercolors for advertisements such as "Grandpa's Wonder Soap."⁹ Maurer was one of many artists who began their art careers in the commercial trade.

During his formative years, Maurer attended classes at the National Academy of Design in New York.¹⁰ The National Academy of Design, founded in 1826, was one of the premier professional art schools in the United States. Organized and run by artists, it offered a variety of courses and sponsored

⁹ McCausland, A.H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 41.

¹⁰ Maurer's attendance at the National Academy of Design is documented in the National Academy of Design Records on deposit at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Contrary to a reference in the catalogue of the exhibition The American Century: Art and Culture 1900-1950 (Whitney Museum of American Art, 1999), Maurer was not a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. The Whitney catalogue incorrectly states that Maurer attended the Pennsylvania Academy and studied under Thomas Anshutz (p. 97). Correspondence with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts archivist confirms that this was not the case.

juried art exhibitions, which helped aspiring artists establish themselves within the artistic community.¹¹

Alfred Maurer followed in the footsteps of his elder brother Charles, who was registered in the Academy as early as 1881. Alfred attended selected classes at the Academy beginning in 1885 and continued to study there through 1897. He was registered in the National Academy's Antique School from 1885 to 1892 and from 1893 to 1895. He attended Life School classes at the Academy from 1889 to 1897.¹² Maurer's training at this distinguished institution proved central to his early artistic development, for it was within the academic strictures favored by the Academy that he first honed his technical skills and concentrated on becoming an artist.

While at the Academy, Maurer studied primarily under Edgar Melville Ward (1839–1915). Ward served as Assistant Director under Lemuel Wilmarth in 1882-83, before he became Director of the National Academy in 1889. He

¹¹ Curiously, Maurer did not participate in these exhibitions during his student years. He only showed in the Academy exhibitions in 1901 and 1902, after having already completed his studies at the National Academy of Design and spending time abroad. In both 1901 and 1902, Maurer also exhibited with the more progressive New York-based Society of American Artists. Although not a member of this Society, Maurer showed three paintings at its 1901 annual exhibition, including *An Arrangement*, and presented three works in its 1902 show. The American exhibitions in which Maurer participated most frequently just after the turn of the century were the annual shows at the Art Institute of Chicago and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

¹² Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, National Academy of Design Records, reel 2051. Antique classes at the NAD were started when the school opened in 1826. Life School classes at the NAD were first initiated in 1837. For a detailed account of the National Academy of Design, see Lois Marie Fink and Joshua C. Taylor, *Academy: The Academic Tradition in American Art* (Washington, D.C.: published for the National Collection of Fine Arts by Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975). See also Eliot Clark, *History of the National Academy of Design, 1825-1953* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

maintained a strong presence at the Academy and had a determining influence on the countless artists who trained at this institution. Ward was well schooled in the history of nineteenth-century art, and was extremely knowledgeable about artistic developments in France. He imparted this knowledge directly to his students and shared it as well with a wider audience through articles that he wrote in the mid-1890s for such journals as The Monthly Illustrator. As a teacher, Ward advocated the value of experimentation and encouraged his pupils to be originators rather than mere imitators of others' methods. He urged his students to "paint themselves into their work," and although he did not feel he could teach them how to paint, he sustained the belief that he could show his students how to see.¹³

Ward, who had trained at the École des Beaux-Arts under Alexandre Cabanel (1840-95), taught at the Academy's Painting School and offered instruction in the Antique and Life School night classes as well. Teachers such as Ward guided the development of promising art students like Maurer as they worked to develop and refine their technical skills in the academic tradition revered by the National Academy of Design. Accordingly, Maurer and his classmates began their education by copying from engravings, lithographs, and paintings. As part of their basic training, they worked from antique casts of

¹³ Marck, "Notes from Mr. Edgar Ward's Class-Talks at the National Academy of Design," The Art Interchange 33 (November 1894): 131-132.

classic sculpture. This included copying from the collection of casts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which from the 1880s onward served as an invaluable resource for students.¹⁴

Once pupils demonstrated sufficient progress in the basic areas of training, they advanced to working directly from live models in the Life School. There, models typically assumed contrived poses, often in imitation of well-known sculptures from antiquity, thus reinforcing the importance of the classical tradition. Study of the nude figure was a focal point of training in the Life classes at the National Academy of Design. These classes were segregated.¹⁵ Men and women sketched and painted separately from the nude, as it was considered improper for both genders to work from the unclothed model in each other's presence.

In addition to studying with Ward at the National Academy, Maurer most likely attended Ward's informal Sunday morning painting classes held at the Tenth Street Studio Building. From 1890 to 1915, Ward occupied a studio space in this important enclave for painters, sculptors, writers, and architects, where William Merritt Chase, one of America's most celebrated artists, had been a member from 1878 until 1895. During Maurer's excursions to the Studio

¹⁴ Lois Marie Fink and Joshua C. Taylor, Academy: The Academic Tradition in American Art, p.65.

¹⁵ Ibid, p.61. The Life School for Women was initiated at the Academy in 1871.

Building he presumably encountered Chase, whose art, as we shall later examine, was to be a great source of inspiration for Maurer as it was for a great many others.

Outside of the Academy and the Tenth Street Studio, Maurer painted with the Country Sketch Club, an organization founded by Van Dearing Perrine that was active between 1895 and 1912.¹⁶ At various times the Country Sketch Club counted among its members Maurice Sterne, William Glackens, “Pop” Hart (George Overbury Hart), G. Glenn Newell, and Edmond Weill, and Ernst David Roth. These artists gathered at what Maurer’s friend Maurice Sterne described as “a huge loft on Broadway and Thirteenth Street in New York and an old shack across the Hudson River in Ridgefield, New Jersey, where we spent our weekends.”¹⁷ Perrine’s biographer, Lolita Flockhart, offered insight into these events. As she noted, these weekends were, “symposiums of delight, when art theories were confidently tossed back and forth The idea of a good time at Ridgefield was to sketch and then sketch some more To be

¹⁶ Van Dearing Perrine had enrolled at the National Academy in 1895.

¹⁷ For a brief mention of the Country Sketch Club see Shadow and Light: The Life, Friends and Opinions of Maurice Sterne, ed. Charlotte Leon Mayerson (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), pp. 38-39.

sure there were evenings when the weary painters would sit around a blazing fire to discuss art or tell stories.”¹⁸

Working in this informal, picturesque setting provided Maurer with an opportunity to express himself freely, away from the constraints and considerations associated with a formal classroom setting. During his association with the Country Sketch Club, Maurer painted outdoors and indulged in landscape subjects rendered in a subdued, tonalist manner as exemplified by Landscape (c. 1897, fig. 2).

Though first formed in 1895, the Country Sketch Club only began to hold exhibitions at the National Academy in 1898. Although already living in Paris by this time, Maurer was asked to send works from abroad for a show of the Club on view at the National Academy. He was listed in the exhibit’s catalogue with his Paris address.¹⁹ The Club’s second annual exhibition was held the following year in 1899. It was reviewed by a critic for the New York Sun who offered the following overview:

The work of a score of young men, students or recent products of the arts schools, was put on view and aroused the interest of those who care for the future of our national art It goes without saying that the work

¹⁸ Lolita Flockhart, The Story of Van Dearing Perrine (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1939), p. 83.

¹⁹ This material comes from an unsourced draft of work projected and begun by the late Nick Madormo. While Madormo’s manuscript on Maurer was never completed and remains unsourced, my own research has proven the accuracy of his scholarship and I can therefore rely upon it. All subsequent references to this material will be cited as: Madormo, Maurer manuscript draft.

which was shown was crude; more, however, which the technical defects showed earnest endeavor These men will henceforth be carefully watched by collectors.²⁰

Maurer was again represented in the Country Sketch Club's annual exhibition the following year, which was held at the Art Institute of Chicago.

1.3. Early Years in Paris: 1897-1900

On November 13, 1897 Maurer sailed on the *Rotterdam* for his first pilgrimage to Paris. He joined the legions of American artists in the late nineteenth century to travel across the Atlantic in search of first-hand experience of European art and culture. This artistic migration began in the 1870s and remained unabated until the onset of World War I in 1914.

“Americans go to London for social triumph, or to float railroad shares, to Rome for art's sake, but they go to Paris to enjoy themselves,” wrote the American author Richard Davis in his 1895 publication About Paris.²¹ The German philosopher Walter Benjamin referred to Paris as “the capital of the nineteenth century,” and artists such as the American Maurice Sterne

²⁰ As cited in Madormo, Maurer manuscript draft.

²¹ Richard H. Davis, About Paris (1895; reprint, Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Gregg Press, 1969), p. 47.

considered a visit or study in Paris to be the goal of every student in his generation.²²

Paris far exceeded what America had to offer in terms of artistic and cultural opportunities. One of the premier international art centers, teeming with ateliers and salons, it provided Americans such as Maurer with a vast array of opportunities for study and exhibition. Americans abroad regularly submitted works for exhibition at the French salons, and by 1900 their participation was so significant that they comprised the largest group of foreign exhibitors. The salons were considered a proving ground for American artists and it was understood that success at them was invaluable to their career. As Elizabeth Hutton Turner noted, "Acceptance of a work by a Salon signified entrance into a prestigious international coterie and broader appeal for American art on the world stage."²³

Maurer, who would remain a bachelor throughout his life, arrived unattached in Paris in December 1897.²⁴ With the exception of several brief trips back to the United States, he resided in France until 1914. Although

²² Shadow and Light, p. 38.

²³ Elizabeth Hutton Turner, American Artists in Paris, 1919-1929 (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1988), p. 9.

²⁴ It is unclear why Maurer never married. There has been speculation for many years that he was gay and if this was indeed the case, then it might certainly account for his unmarried status.

Maurer made regular excursions to the French countryside, he was primarily based in Paris during his seventeen-odd-years abroad. Shortly after he arrived in the bustling French metropolis, the twenty-nine-year-old enrolled at the Académie Julian. Maurer was registered on December 6, 1897, and paid a tuition of 31.10 francs for *chevalet et matin*, an easel and morning class.²⁵ Maurer's registration record lists the Chicago artist Lawton Parker as the individual who referred Maurer to Julian's. (It was common practice to have a friend, colleague, or fellow artist refer newcomers to Julian's).²⁶ Maurer's address, according to Académie Julian records, was 203 boulevard Raspail, the same location where William Glackens resided during a Paris stay in 1895 before he found a studio at 6 rue Boissonade. The boulevard Raspail was one of two principle arteries in the Montparnasse section. It was heavily traveled and lined with cafés and small restaurants commonly referred to as "crémeries."

The Académie Julian was founded in 1868 by the French artist, former wrestler, and circus manager Rodolphe Julian, who, like Edgar Ward, Maurer's other teacher, had studied under Alexandre Cabanel. It was a favorite private

²⁵ Paris, Archives Nationales. Archives de l'Académie Julian, 63 AS 1, box 2. Information pertaining to Maurer's study at Julian's has until now been based on speculation. This is the first time that the Académie Julian records, which have become recently accessible, have been surveyed for specific information pertaining to Maurer's training there.

²⁶ Parker studied at the Académie Julian under William-Adolphe Bouguereau and Tony Robert-Fleury in 1889. He also studied with James McNeill Whistler at the Académie Carmen and worked in a Whistlerian manner during the 1890s. Maurer and Parker likely knew each other through the American Art Association in Paris where many American artists from diverse backgrounds and locations convened.

Parisian art school among Americans, particularly in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Aspiring artists converged at Julian's to study with such noted figures as Gustave-Rudolphe Boulanger, Adolphe-William Bouguereau, Jean-Joseph Benjamin Constant, Jean-Paul Laurens, Jules-Joseph Lefebvre, and Tony Robert-Fleury.

By the end of the nineteenth century there were eighteen branches of the Académie Julian located throughout Paris.²⁷ There were a generous number of critics and teachers offering instruction at these various venues, and students selected the master with whom they wished to study. Maurer was registered at 31 rue du Dragon in an atelier in the Latin Quarter just south of boulevard Saint-Germain.²⁸ Both Laurens and Constant taught in this studio noted for its American population.²⁹

The course of study offered by the instructors at Julian's accorded with the teaching principles espoused by the distinguished government-sponsored École des Beaux-Arts, the art institute *par excellence*. The École was the more formal of the two schools and required students to pass a stiff examination to

²⁷ Barbara Weinberg, The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and Their French Teachers (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), p. 227.

²⁸ Paris, Archives Nationales. Archives de l'Académie Julian, 63 AS 1, box 2.

²⁹ Catherine Fehrer, The Julian Academy Paris 1868–1939 (New York: Shepherd Gallery, 1989), p. 3.

secure admission, which was tuition free. The Académie Julian was accessible to all and offered a more liberal working environment.

Students at Julian's focused on enhancing their technical skills, which prepared many for entrance to the École des Beaux-Arts and also strengthened their chances of having their work accepted in the government-backed salon exhibitions. At the Académie Julian students practiced the fundamentals of technique and focused on draftsmanship, modeling volume, and mastering proportion. They drew from engravings and antique casts, and, most importantly, they worked from the live model. Life study was an essential component of French academic art training. It was held in the highest esteem in the nineteenth century, with critics such as Clarence Cook deeming the skillful rendering of the nude an indication of an artist's proficiency. Cook, like many authorities, considered the naked human body to be the standard of all art, and noted that "the painting of the nude is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of art."³⁰ Typically, students drew and painted nude models in standard formulaic poses—propped up on boxes, or standing in conventional positions, with hand on hip.³¹ Seated Nude, (c.1897, fig. 3), is a rare example of Maurer's

³⁰ As quoted in Weinberg, The Lure of Paris, p. 15. Clarence Cook, Art and Artists of Our Time, 3 vols. (New York: Selmar Hess, 1888; reprint, New York: Garland, 1978), 1: 266.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

academic painting from the model. It illustrates the caliber of his draftsmanship at the time and reveals the facility with which he handled such subject matter.

Though Maurer's course of study at Julian's was brief—Académie Julian records indicate that Maurer discontinued classes there after approximately three weeks—his encounters at Julian's furnished him with first-hand experience of art training abroad. What prompted him to discontinue his course of study is unclear. Maurer seems to have had the financial support of his father, not only at this time, but also throughout most of his seventeen years abroad.³² Since finances were unlikely a factor prompting Maurer to leave Julians, his departure might be understood as an indication of his impatience with the academic curriculum, which focused mainly on developing one's technical skills without any special emphasis on anatomy, perspective, art history, or aesthetics.

Maurer may also have wished to cultivate his talents by focusing on the rich and fascinating art newly available to him in great quantities throughout Paris. Visits to the local galleries and the Louvre, with its broad array of masterpieces from revered artists of the past, provided Maurer with new and unlimited sources of inspiration. He painted and sketched in the Louvre and made copies after the Old Masters and salon artists. Maurer also took an interest in creating work that depicted others painting at this esteemed museum, as seen

³² For additional information, see Chapter 4 of this dissertation, fn. 43.

for example by Copying in the Louvre (c. 1900, fig. 4), a painting that Maurer likely executed during his first years in Paris.

Leaving Julian's behind, Maurer found camaraderie and support from colleagues at the American Art Association, located at 2 Impasse de Conti, Quai de Conti, near the Institut de France and across from the Louvre. Situated in an elegant townhouse, the American Art Association had an impressive library filled with American magazines, newspapers, and books. It also housed a dining area that featured inexpensive American cuisine as well as a billiard room.

The Association was founded in 1890, one year after the 1889 Paris Exposition, and was an all-male domain where Americans gathered in large numbers. Membership at the Association was by no means limited to artists. Doctors, lawyers, and journalists were among the many individuals welcome at this club. The Association provided Americans with a place of comfort and companionship, reading and writing facilities, and a bureau of information, which gave Americans insight into living and working in Paris.³³ Particularly during its formative years, the Association was considered a sort of safe haven for Americans abroad. As one reviewer noted, in its earliest years it was a place

³³ Loella B. Mendenhall [Laura McProud], "History of the American Art Association," in American Student Census, Paris, 1903 (Souvenir of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition). My gratitude goes to William H. Gerds for providing me access to his library and to his file on the American Art Association.

where “their own tongue was spoken and where their own country was most thought of; a place where patriotism was nourished and kept alive.”³⁴ This concern for protecting American artists from excessive French influence had abated by about 1897 when a newly elected president, the wealthy Philadelphian Rodman Wanamaker, joined the Association and shifted the tenor of the environment to a more open and cosmopolitan tone. This change was already underway by the time Maurer arrived in 1897.

At the “club,” as the American Art Association was often called, Maurer would have had contact with American artists of diverse backgrounds who worked in a spectrum of artistic styles. Such exposure to Americans attempting to find their way in unfamiliar territory was undoubtedly a comfort to Maurer, who was then new to Paris and had little knowledge of French, which he proclaimed was “a language without an end.”³⁵ Among those Americans whom Maurer would have likely known at the Association were Lawton Parker, Henry Ossowa Tanner, Richard E. Miller, Augustus B. Koopman, Alfred Humphreys, and Frederick Carl Frieseke.

The Association housed an exhibition hall where Maurer debuted his Parisian work in 1899. American newspapers and periodicals took notice of

³⁴ H.P. The Limner, I, no. 4 (May 1895), p. 4.

³⁵ Elizabeth McCausland Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel D379, frame 850. Maurer later developed a much better grasp of the French language.

activities at the club and kept readers back in the states abreast of current events and exhibitions. Critics followed the latest art showings and reported new advances made by American artists. Gabriel Paulin was one such reviewer who provided insight into American happenings abroad. Reporting in the May 1899 issue of Brush and Pencil he noted, “Those who have been following the annual exhibitions of the association, were certainly not disappointed upon the opening of the present one—the second of the season—at which there is, as usual, much work of real excellence shown.” After he commented on the work of Lawton Parker, Fred Dana Marsh, Harry Mills Walcott, Henry Ossawa Tanner, and Lionel Walden, Paulin singled out a study by Alfred Maurer, which he characterized as embodying a poetic quality.³⁶

Primary documents in which Maurer discussed his work are extremely rare; however, in 1899 he wrote to his father back in New York and apprised him of his participation in one of the Association’s exhibits. Maurer wrote, “I have two pictures on exhibition at the American club, the one which I painted about a year ago in the hotel and gave up in disgust had been liked by all the students, the other an old man’s head which I painted the last day for sending in and which I thought quite good hangs in such bad light that I can’t tell if it has

³⁶ Gabriel Paulin, “Exhibition of the American Art Association of Paris,” Brush and Pencil 4, no. 2 (May 1899): 105-106.

changed in drying”³⁷ In 1899, the same year he presented these two paintings, Maurer also exhibited at La Galerie des Machines (Paris) in the “Exposition Annuelle des Beaux-Arts,” sponsored by the Société des Artistes Français, where he showed his painting La Tireuse de Cartes (location unknown).³⁸

³⁷ Letter from Alfred Maurer to Louis Maurer in McCausland Papers, AAA, D379, frame 850.

³⁸ In 1899, Maurer also sent his painting The Fortune Teller to the “Twelfth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists,” held at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Chapter 2. Maurer's Early Figurative Works: 1899-1905

2.1. Whistler's Impact

At the turn of the century, Maurer was ensconced in Paris and worked as an expatriate painter. He created a body of art that was cosmopolitan in character and reflected the blurred boundaries that existed between American and European art at the time. At this critical juncture in his career, Maurer painted elegant figurative compositions that were directly inspired by the art and aesthetic theories of the American expatriate painter, James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903). Whistler was a celebrated dandy and a figure of international renown. He had a great influence on many impressionable artists who honored his example by executing pictures in what has come to be known as a Whistlerian mode of painting.

Maurer, who was rather a dandy himself, thoroughly endorsed Whistler's innovative approach to art and found merit in his unique philosophical beliefs. Although Maurer did not formally study with Whistler and there is no documented evidence of a meeting between the two artists, it is possible that Maurer may have had some contact with Whistler around this time. This contact perhaps came through Lawton Parker, May Preston, or Frederick Carl Frieseke, Maurer's American friends who studied with

Whistler at his Paris school, the Académie Carmen.¹ Maurer also associated with Robert Henri's student and friend Emilia Cimono, who was quite friendly with Whistler.²

With its accent on tonal harmony and beautiful forms artfully arranged, Whistler's art represented a welcome respite from the academic study that Maurer sought to transcend. Inspired by Whistler's example, specifically his emphasis on the abstract qualities of form and color, and his realization of the decorative potential of painting, Maurer placed new focus on communicating subjective experiences in his art and created a body of imagery that celebrated the triumph of beauty over truth.

Whistler was one of the most renowned personalities of the *fin-de-siècle* art world and a central figure in the Aesthetic movement.³ His evocative imagery embodied the very spirit of Aestheticism and represented a synthesis between the conceptual world and nature. It transcended the

¹ My gratitude goes to Linda Merrill for sharing her list of students who attended the Académie Carmen. Merrill comprised this list with Nigel Thorp, Director of the Centre for Whistler Studies at the University of Glasgow.

² Emilia Cimino was friendly with Whistler and was Rodin's secretary. She was a staunch supporter of Robert Henri and a member of his Paris circle as was Maurer. References to Emilia Cimino appear in William Inness Homer, Robert Henri and His Circle (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1969, revised ed. 1988).

³ Whistler was a key contributor to the English Aesthetic movement, which reached its height in America in the first half of the 1880s. Other major figures associated with this movement included William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Oscar Wilde. The Aesthetic movement sought to collapse the boundaries that existed between the fine and decorative arts. Those associated with this movement championed the value of art for art's sake.

material realm and celebrated a form of rarefied beauty—an ideal of what a picture could represent. Arguably the most important artist to explore the decorative potential of Japonisme, Whistler helped to bridge the artistic gap between East and West and he moved beyond other Western painters of the 1860s and 1870s.⁴ He found support for his philosophies in the writings of Edgar Allan Poe (whose work Maurer also admired),⁵ Charles Baudelaire, and Stephane Mallarmé, and in Théophile Gautier's "l'art pour l'art," which posited that art was not a means, but an end in and of itself.⁶

Whistler came to Paris from England in 1892.⁷ From 1892 until 1901 he occupied a studio space located at rue Notre Dame des Champs at

⁴ David Park Curry, James McNeill Whistler at the Freer Gallery of Art (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., in association with the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1984), p. 17.

⁵ For biographical information about Fra Dana refer to footnote 18 of this chapter. According to Maurer's friend Fra Dana, "Mr. Maurer was a great admirer of Poe. He was not in any sense a wide reader, being entirely too busy working at his own job, but he was a discriminating reader and enthusiastic when he had found an artistic piece of work." March 11, 1949 letter from Fra Dana to Elizabeth McCausland. McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377, frame 297. Fra Dana made another reference to literary works, which Maurer admired, and stated that he also "found refreshment and stimulus in Conrad's style." Fra Dana received her first copy of Conrad's Victory from Maurer. She also notes "I gave Alfred Maurer Huckelberry Finn. . .his introduction to Mark Twain which he liked so much. He thought the description of going down the Mississippi was perfectly wonderful, particularly the storm on the Mississippi." Transcription of Fra Dana letter in the Elizabeth McCausland Papers, Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art, reel D377, frame 308. These appear to be the only known references to Maurer's taste in literature.

⁶ Roy McMullen, Victorian Outsider: A Biography of James McNeill Whistler (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1973), pp. 59, 232.

⁷ Whistler left England after the highly publicized and scandalous 1878 trial in which he sued the critic John Ruskin for libel. Whistler sued Ruskin for the derisive comment the critic made about his painting Nocturne in Blue and Gold. Regarding Whistler and this work, Ruskin remarked, "I never expected to hear a Coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." Whistler won this landmark suit, which awarded him a pittance, but he also suffered terrible financial loss as a result of legal costs incurred during the suit. Consequently, he was forced to file for bankruptcy.

No. 86.⁸ With a strong American following in place, he opened the Académie Carmen in 1898. As Whistler's biographer reported, when this school first opened "students were coming in squads, ...the Passage was crowded, and ... owners of carriages struggled with *rapins* and prize-winners to get in."⁹ The Académie Carmen, which was located on the Passage Stanislas in the Montparnasse section of Paris, was financed by Whistler and named after Carmen Rossi, one of his favorite models. It was operated in a fashion similar to the Académie Julian where models posed for students throughout the day. Whistler taught only intermittently at this atelier, which during its two-and-a-half years in existence catered to a substantial number of American and Anglo-American students.

Whistler's aesthetic agenda included a complete focus on painting. This emphasis on the art of painting stood in contrast to the more traditional courses of study offered at other academies, where developing and refining one's draftsmanship was of chief importance. Whistler believed that painting was essentially a science of color manipulation. His conception was, as

⁸ For information pertaining to artists' studios in Paris, see John Milner, The Studios of Paris (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 211-216.

⁹ The most comprehensive account of the Académie Carmen is cited in E[lizabeth] R and J[oseph] Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1911), pp. 229-246. Information about the Académie Carmen can also be found in Barbara Weinberg, The Lure of Paris: Nineteenth-Century American Painters and Their French Teachers (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), p. 61.

described by the critic Sadakichi Hartmann, “largely a sense for tone, a realization of some dream in black and silvery grey, in pale gold or greenish blues. . . . He saw life in visions, and his subjects were merely means to express them.”¹⁰

The preparation and arrangement of the painter’s palette was of particular importance to Whistler. He believed that it was essential for an artist to demonstrate complete mastery of their palette and preached that it was the “instrument upon which the painter plays his harmony. . . the tenderly-cared-for violin of the great musician.”¹¹ As recalled by Anna Ostroumova-Lebedva, a student at the Académie Carmen:

I was expected to mix the predominant colour for the model and spread it in the middle of my palette. Underneath it I was to make a strip of black colour to correspond to the darkest possible shade in the model. Between the light tone of the body and the black colour one had to mix all the intervening gradations of [the] same tone and each one had its separate brush. . . . One could only start to paint on the canvas when all the colours were prepared on the palette as if the model was already finished in your mind and you have only to collect together all the pieces.¹²

¹⁰ Sadakichi Hartmann, The Whistler Book (Boston: L.C. Page & Co., 1910), pp.4-5.

¹¹ Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler, p. 376.

¹² Portions of Ostroumova-Lebedva’s memoirs were translated in Ronald Anderson and Anne Koval, James McNeil Whistler: Beyond the Myth (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 1995), 437-438. The excerpt used here is cited from Barbara Weinberg, “Friesseke’s Art Before 1910,” in Frederick Carl Friesseke: The Evolution of an American Impressionist (Savannah, Ga.: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 60.

Whistler extolled the importance of judicious selection from nature and drew poignant analogies between music and nature, identifying the art of music with the art of painting. He believed that the natural world provided an endless selection of forms from which one was free to select and arrange. Whistler was the first artist in the 1860s to highlight the correlation between music and painting and to apply musical terms to his work. He stated that it was the painter's obligation to act as a musical composer, to combine tones and create harmonies. He proclaimed in his famous "Ten o'Clock" lecture of 1885:

Nature contains the elements, in colour and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains all notes of music.

But the artist is born to pick, and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the result may be beautiful—as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he brings forth from chaos glorious harmony.

To say to the painter, that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano.

That Nature is always right, is an assertion, artistically as untrue, as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted. Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might almost be said that Nature is usually wrong; that is to say, the condition of things that shall bring about perfection of harmony worthy [of] a picture is rare, and not common at all.¹³

¹³ James McNeill Whistler, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (New York: Putnam's, 1890), pp. 142-43. Whistler first delivered his "Ten o'Clock" lecture on February 20, 1885 at Prince's Hall in London. It was published in limited edition that same year. The first American edition was published in Boston and New York in 1888.

Through his art, teaching, and lectures, Whistler challenged traditional attitudes toward representation, subject matter, and the very purpose of painting. He championed formal rather than representational values in art and celebrated the decorative potential of modern portraiture. Whistler shunned the commonplace, was adamantly opposed to the faithful reproduction of nature, and had little regard for art that was didactic or literary. “Art for art’s sake” was his revolutionary call to arms, and it was echoed by Maurer as well as innumerable others of his generation.

By 1900 when Maurer was painting his Whistlerian inspired compositions, Whistler had already come to be regarded as a living old master, a nineteenth-century icon, and a celebrity of sorts.¹⁴ He had entered the canon of art history. His works were discussed, debated, and written about, and appreciated by an international audience. His accomplishments were honored in such forums as the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900 where Whistler showed his Velazquez-inspired Brown and Gold (1895-1900, Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, University of Glasgow, Scotland), Mother of Pearl and Silver (c. 1894, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), and Symphony in White [The Little White Girl:

¹⁴ For an insightful discussion on the subject of Whistler’s public persona, see Sarah Burns, “Old Maverick to Old Master: Whistler in Turn-of-the-Century America,” American Art Journal 22 (1990), pp. 20-49.

Symphony in White No. II], (1864, Tate Gallery, London). These stunning paintings, which Maurer would have seen, most certainly offered Maurer a note of encouragement in his own pursuit of the Whistlerian ideal.

2.2. In the Whistlerian Spirit

Maurer launched his professional career as an accomplished painter of subjects rendered in a Whistlerian manner and earned accolades for this work on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁵ His figurative imagery, with the exception of several notable examples, was comprised almost exclusively of paintings of women, and thus reflected the prevalent character of this subject matter in French art.¹⁶ Only four paintings of male subjects, including the artist's self-portrait, are known.¹⁷ These are The White Door (c. 1900, fig.

¹⁵ For a detailed account of the honors and awards Maurer received for his figure paintings see chapter 4 of this dissertation as well as the Exhibition Chronology in the appendix.

¹⁶ Whether portrayed as heroines, virgins, domestic ladies of leisure, or symbols of beauty, portraits of women in various guises enjoyed an exalted status in the turn-of-the-century art world.

¹⁷ Maurer's 1897 Self-Portrait (Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, Minn.), The White Door (c. 1900, Curtis Galleries, Minneapolis, Minn.); Man in Interior (1899, Curtis Galleries, Minneapolis, Minn.); and The Town Crier (c. 1900-02, Private Collection, Washington, D.C.) are the only four known male subjects by Maurer. Both Man in Interior and The White Door appear to portray the same bearded model and both are painted in oil on panel. The White Door was featured in 1901 at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo and was awarded the Bronze medal. It was shown in 1902 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and at the Society of American Artists in New York. It may have been painted during Maurer's year-long stay in 1901 in New York, but this is not certain. The Town Crier, only recently discovered by this author, was originally found around 1925 in a Paris flea market by Pierre Daura. Daura wrote to Elizabeth McCausland about this painting in 1948 and referred to it as "The Philosopher." He purchased this work as well as two others from a Paris flea market. See McCausland Papers, AAA, reel

5), Man in Interior (c. 1900, fig. 6), The Town Crier (c.1900-02, fig. 7), and Maurer's Self –Portrait (1897, fig. 8).

Maurer's compositions were executed primarily as salon pieces and as formal exercises, rather than as commissioned portraits. Several of his figurative works depict his sister Eugenia as well as his dear friends Fra Dinwiddie Dana and Rosalie Fitzpatrick. At least one painting of Fra Dana, Portrait of Mrs. Dana (c. 1901, fig. 9) has been located. It is part of the extensive holdings left by Fra Dana to the University of Montana.¹⁸

Numerous images of Rosalie Fitzpatrick have come to light over the years. Most of these now reside in private collections. Those in this category include Miss Roselle Fitzpatrick (n.d., fig. 10); Woman in Pink (n.d., fig. 11); Figure of a Woman (c. 1902, fig. 12); and Portrait of Rosalie

D377, frames 280-281; 285-287. This painting was left to Pierre Daura's daughter and remained in storage in her house in France for many years. The Town Crier, along with another early portrait by Maurer known as The Midinette (c. 1902) was gifted to family friends in Washington, D.C. approximately two years ago. The paintings were in extremely delicate condition and recently underwent a course of conservation in Paris. While images of the Maurer's Self-Portrait and Man in Interior (alternatively titled Interior with Seated Figure) have been previously published (see Nick Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainments," American Art Journal 15 (winter 1983): 10-11), The White Door has never been reproduced prior to its inclusion in this dissertation and an image of The Town Crier was only reproduced in a 1954 newspaper article. See "Browsings," The News, Lynchburg, Virginia, April 16, 1954.

¹⁸ Fra Dana married a wealthy Montana rancher in 1896 and the following year studied with William Meritt Chase, who painted her portrait in 1897. She studied art in New York and Paris and painted until 1912 at which point she largely devoted herself to her wifely duties and running the ranch. She resumed painting much later in her life. Over the years, Fra Dana amassed an extensive collection of artwork much of which was executed by artists whom she met in her travels. For more detailed biographical information pertaining to Fra Dana the reader is referred to the University of Montana, Missoula Art Collection, Missoula Montana, where there are extensive holdings from Fra Dana's personal collection, including the following paintings by Maurer: Girl in a Yellow Silk Skirt (c. 1901, fig. 39); Portrait of Mrs. Dana (c. 1901, fig. 22); Girl in a Striped Silk Skirt (1901, fig. 23); Gabrielle (c. 1900, fig. 13); and Paris Night Scene (c. 1900, fig. 57).

Fitzpatrick, "Riz" (c. 1902, fig. 13). These appear to have been executed during Maurer's year-long visit to New York from 1901 to 1902.

Rosalie Fitzpatrick, whom Maurer referred to as "Riz," was a long-time family friend. She modeled for Maurer in his New York City studio at 318 West 42nd Street, where he painted and photographed her in various poses and costumes.¹⁹ Rosalie was one of five children, the daughter of James J. Fitzpatrick and Bridgette Fitzpatrick, who were close friends of Alfred's parents. She was statuesque, tall and slender, and towered over Alfred. She has been described as a formidable woman who was beautifully attired according to the highest standards of the day.²⁰

Apart from family and friends, Maurer painted the Paris models Gabrielle Aubry and Jeanne Blazy. He executed at least three works of Gabrielle, who had also posed for the American artist Frederick Carl Frieseke,²¹ with whom Maurer may have briefly shared a studio in Paris.²²

¹⁹ Reproductions of these photographs, in the collection of the author, reveal a strong likeness between the model and the artist's paintings of her. While Maurer was in New York, he developed his photographs of Rosalie in the basement of his father's home at 404 West 43rd Street.

²⁰ Information pertaining to Rosalie was provided by Meg Kimpton, Rosalie's great-niece. In a letter to the author dated May 18, 2000, Ms. Kimpton noted that Rosalie resided in the family house at 552 West 162nd Street until 1951, at which point she moved and deaccessioned many of the fifty-two paintings by Maurer that she and her family had acquired over the years. She gave several of these works to family members and sold approximately forty-two of them to the art dealer Bertha Schaefer, who represented Maurer's work at her New York gallery in the 1950s.

²¹ According to Nicholas Kilmer, Frederick Carl Frieseke's grandson, Gabrielle Aubry's name and address appear on the same page as Jeanne Blazy's name and address on page 16 of Frederick Carl Frieseke's notebook. Maurer's friend Fra Dana recalled, "Gabrielle was painted on Paris canvas from Gabrielle, the

Among Maurer's portrayals of Gabrielle are a small, unlocated study of the model, The Black Parasol (Gabrielle) (c. 1904, fig. 14), Woman in Black (Gaby?) (c. 1904, fig. 15), and Gabrielle (c. 1904, fig. 16) a six-foot tall imposing portrait of the model garbed in a brilliant blue mandarin coat.²³

Although Maurer appears to have begun creating portraits of Gabrielle around 1900, it was not until 1905 that paintings bearing the title "Gabrielle" were featured regularly in exhibitions.²⁴

Another model Maurer was fond of painting was Jeanne Blazy. Jeanne posed for many artists of the day including Whistler, Frieske, Jimmy Sawyer, and the American sculptor Frederick MacMonnies. Jeanne modeled for MacMonnies' well-known work Bacchante with Infant Faun

Paris model. Then it was exhibited in London, and Berlin and in Paris..." McCausland Papers AAA, reel D377, frame 306. Gabrielle was purchased by Maurer's friend Fra Dana. It depicts the model posed in a mandarin coat, which according to Maurer's biographer, he gave to Fra Dana who wore it until her 1948 death.

²² Frieske and Maurer knew each other in Paris, probably through the American Art Association. They both painted Whistler-inspired works and scenes at Le Bal Bullier around 1900. In addition to painting from the same model Jeanne, a letter from Maurer's friend Alice Wertz suggests that they may have also shared a studio around 1900. McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 1306.

²³ Gabrielle was described in the press as a magnificent example of Maurer's art. "His work denotes an independent spirit, one that is not tied down to the conventional poses of handsome models, but that expresses itself first and last in harmonious colors and tones." As cited in "Some American Painters," The Collector and Art Critic, November 25, 1906: 23-26.

²⁴ The earliest known exhibited work entitled "Gabrielle" was shown in 1905 in an exhibition of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts. Maurer also displayed a painting titled "Gabrielle" in 1905 at the Art Institute of Chicago. Exhibition records indicate that in 1906 he showed at least two paintings titled "Gabrielle"-- one in the "Inaugural Exhibition," at the John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis, Indiana, and another in the "Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of American Art" at the Cincinnati Museum, Eden Park. A painting bearing the same title was also shown in 1906 in the "Annual Exhibition of American Art" at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

(1894, Terra Museum of American Art, Chicago), which was shown at the 1893 Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts. Frederick Carl Frieseke recalled his experiences with this popular Parisian model:

I've had a nice model. She's as useful as anything in other things besides posing. Brings my things for luncheon and cooks them before she leaves, hunts up anything I wish and is always cheerful. Always late but works on as long as I wish. She has posed for Whistler and lots of the big men. Posed for MacMonnies statue in the Luxembourg.²⁵

Jeanne was the subject of a number of Maurer's paintings, including Jeanne in Interior (c. 1900-04, fig. 17), Portrait of Jeanne (c. 1900-04, fig. 18), Study for Jeanne (c. 1900, fig. 19), The Midinette (Woman with Hat Box) (c. 1902, fig. 20), Jeanne in the Doorway (c. 1900-04, fig. 21), and Maurer's most renowned image of the model, an arresting portrait measuring 74 3/4 x 39 3/8," simply entitled Jeanne (c. 1904, fig. 22). As illustrated by this last example as well the recently discovered The Midinette²⁶ and The Black Cape (c. 1902, fig. 23), Maurer painted works of considerable size, some nearly six feet tall. These ambitious exhibition pieces were executed in a scale popular among society portraits and announced Maurer's gifts as a

²⁵ January 27, 1902 letter from Frieseke to Sarah O'Bryan. As cited in Nicholas Kilmer et al., Frederick Carl Frieseke: The Evolution of an American Impressionist, p. 25.

²⁶ For information pertaining to the provenance of this extraordinary painting, see fn. 17 of this chapter. Refer also to Stacey Epstein, "Alfred H. Maurer: The Midinette & The Town Crier" (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries, 2002).

figure painter. They undoubtedly had a striking presence at the salon exhibitions for which they were intended.²⁷

While Maurer was successful with this large painting format, he also produced works in a range of other sizes, on occasion executing intimately scaled images, such as those he made of Rosalie Fitzpatrick.²⁸ There was no one particular size canvas or panel that Maurer seems to have favored for these early portraits. Such decisions were likely guided by diverse factors, including the size of canvases and painting panels available, space restrictions in and outside the studio, and the length of time allotted for each model's pose.

Recurring compositional designs appear throughout Maurer's early figurative oeuvre. For example, his models tend to be shown in interior spaces, removed from the outside world. They are often depicted standing in or before doorways, as seen in Girl in White (c. 1901, fig. 24), Lady with a Muff (c. 1904, fig. 25), The White Door (c. 1900-01, fig. 5), and Maurer's Jeanne in the Doorway (c. 1904, fig. 21), where the model is posed in the open doorway. In certain instances his subjects are portrayed against simple

²⁷ Maurer's friend Fra Dana recalled, "In the early days he [Maurer] painted very large canvases. He didn't have the room to paint very large ones later in life, for the bed took up most of the room." Transcript of undated statement by Fra Dana in McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377, frame 308.

²⁸ It is not completely clear whether these small paintings were conceived as studies for larger works, or were considered finished paintings in their own right.

monochromatic low-toned backgrounds, as for example in The Model (Figure Study) (1902, fig. 26), as well as in several portraits of Rosalie Fitzpatrick, The Ballet Dancer (n.d., fig. 27), and Jeanne (fig. 22). They are sometimes presented in sparsely decorated spaces, which are adorned only with a suggestion of a curtain or drapery, as illustrated by The Black Cape (fig. 22) and Gabrielle (fig. 16).

Maurer's most Whistlerian paintings, such as At the Window (1899-1900, fig. 28), are notable for their simplicity of design and lack of extraneous detail. Such evocative paintings reflect Maurer's mastery of the art of suggestion. They are rendered in a tightly controlled chromatic range with paint judiciously applied in thin veils of oil color. This medium is often scumbled or stained onto the picture surface in such a way as to project a certain translucency. Maurer's emphasis in these Whistlerian ensembles was on the formal properties of painting—the artificial arrangement of shapes and forms—the balance of color harmonies. He embraced abstract expression, finding unity within a given composition and realizing a complete visual statement. Accordingly, it was not uncommon for him to place the details of a model's character at the service of the plastic qualities of a picture and to use generalized titles for his poetic evocations. The models in these Whistlerian images ultimately function more as formal

armatures for the composition than as individuals with specific identities. Viewers are rarely afforded an opportunity to engage these figures directly. The sitters are usually portrayed from the back, turned slightly away from the viewer, or seen in full profile as in Seated Woman (c. 1902, fig. 29); Girl in a Yellow Silk Skirt (c. 1901, fig. 30);²⁹ At the Window (fig. 28); An Arrangement (1901, fig. 31); and The Red Shawl (c. 1900, fig. 32). In each of these portrayals, the model and viewer are separated and denied a specific point of connection. The onlooker may gaze into the subject's world, but only from a distance.

In At the Window (fig. 28), the seated figure is turned away from artist and audience and peers longingly between two closed window curtains. She is hermetically sealed off from the outside world. She sits in silence and stares into a space, which is only accessible to her in her fantasies. Situating the model before a shrouded window enabled Maurer to explore subtle nuances in varying qualities of light. This particular compositional format originated in seventeenth-century Dutch paintings and later found expression in numerous nineteenth-century compositions,

²⁹ Girl in a Yellow Skirt may very well have been painted in New York during Maurer's 1901 trip home. According to Elizabeth McCausland's archival records, this work depicts a "paid New York model sitting in an uncomfortable chair, the only one in Maurer's New York studio. The model is wearing a yellow flowered skirt which, like the striped skirt, came from Mama Maurer's trunk filled of cloths from the past." It is possible that McCausland obtained this information directly from Fra Dana, who once owned this painting. See McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377.

including J. Alden Weir's 1889 pastel of The Windowseat (Private collection) and in selected portraits by Robert Blum and Charles Ulrich from the 1880s. A critic writing for The Studio in 1885 identified this trend as coming from Munich and, in discussing a painting by Edward Austin Abbey, remarked that it

follows in the wake of a dozen or twenty other artists, all bent on painting people sitting in front of windows shaded by muslin curtains. The fashion was set in Munich, and has been imported thence to our shores, where Mr. Abbey, Mr. Blum, Mr. Ulrich and others have tried their hand at the problem and made their solution interesting.³⁰

On a symbolic level, Maurer's At the Window bears comparison to earlier nineteenth-century depictions of figures set before an open window—works that symbolized what art historian Judith Zilczer has observed as “the Romantic ideal of escape through imaginative contemplation.”³¹

This concept of a model escaping the limits of her environs through “imaginative contemplation” also marks Maurer's Woman with

³⁰ “The Water Color Society,” The Studio, n.s. 1, no. 14 (February 14, 1885): 160. As quoted in Bruce Weber, “Robert Frederick Blum (1857-1903) and His Milieu,” (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1985), p. 246.

³¹ See Judith Zilczer's essay in the exhibition catalogue Alfred H. Maurer: The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Collection (Washington, D.C.: Hirshhorn Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1979). At one point, the Hirshhorn owned seventeen paintings by Maurer, many of which were acquired by Joseph H. Hirshhorn. Over time, a number of these works were deaccessioned by the museum. Included among those are Lady with a Muff, which was sold through Sotheby's in May 2000, purchased by Hollis Taggart Galleries, New York and then sold to private collectors in New York, and Paris Outdoor Café, which is currently in inventory at Hollis Taggart Galleries.

Pottery (1901, fig. 33). Here the principle motif is a kimono-clad model facing forward but gazing downward and seized in a pensive moment. Her identity is completely subsumed by the objects that surround her. She exists as but another decorative vessel in the overall composition, one replete with Japanese artifacts that were fashionable accessories during the Aesthetic movement. Maurer created many works that included Oriental objects and drew heavily upon Japanese design elements in his Whistlerian compositions. He rejected realism in these early portrayals and instead placed emphasis on the symbolic and expressive purposes of an art work. A key example of this is Maurer's The Peacock (c. 1903, fig. 34). In this painting, a female figure swathed in an elaborate sea of patterned fabric is imagined as the human equivalent of an elegant peacock. Other works executed in a similar vein include Young Woman in Kimono (c. 1901, fig. 35), Woman with Pottery (fig. 33) and An Arrangement (fig. 31). These paintings are accented by decorative flatness, shallow space, and patterning—compositional elements popularized by Japanese art, then very much in vogue. They are notable for their incorporation of Oriental art and artifacts such as screens and panels, blue-and-white china, pottery, kimonos and robes. Selected paintings such as Young Woman in Kimono also feature Japanese prints, which were also extremely popular at the time.

Maurer's paintings rendered in the spirit of Japonisme (a term first used in 1872 by the French art critic Philippe Burty) reveal his special interest in forms from the Orient and Occident, which held allure for many nineteenth—and early twentieth—century artists.³² The inclusion of Oriental forms in Maurer's paintings highlights the dialogue between East and West that was pervasive, as information about Eastern art and culture grew increasingly more accessible in Europe and the United States.

“Japan fever” had first made its mark in France and England in the 1860s when Japanese art poured into France and was widely collected. As has been noted, “Appreciation for all things Japanese was stimulated by the Paris Exposition Universelle (1867), which brought many Japanese visitors to the city; it increased in the 1870s as Western artists in printmaking, decorative arts, and painting were affected by the vogue.”³³ While the passion for Japan grew in France and England, it enjoyed only a brief period of rather superficial appeal in America at this time. Americans had come to learn about Japanese culture primarily from French and English sources, rather than directly from the Far East. The 1876 Centennial Exposition in

³² See Phillip Dennis Cate, William R. Johnston, and Gabriel P. Weisberg, Japonisme: Japanese Influence on French Art (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975), xi. As stated in the Preface to this exhibition catalogue, “Japonisme was first used as a term in 1872 by the French art critic Philippe Burty (1830-1890) to ‘designate a new field of study—artistic, historic, and ethnographic. . .’

³³ Ibid.

Philadelphia provided Americans with their first significant exposure to Japanese art and artifacts and introduced them to the refined craftsmanship imported from the Far East. In the 1880s and 1890s, fascination with the exoticism of Japan reached a peak in both Europe and America and widespread curiosity and interest in this culture developed into nothing short of a phenomenon.

Literature about the Far East, as well as exhibits and auctions featuring Japanese art and decorative objects, further stimulated Western interest in Japan. Writers, theorists, and artists responded to the novelty of Japanese aesthetic sources and further promulgated their appeal. Essays about Japanese culture published in periodicals such as Artistic Japan and Japan Weekly Mail provided Americans and Europeans with insight into foreign sensibility and fueled Western enthusiasm for Japanese culture.³⁴ References to Japan became ubiquitous in the work of late nineteenth-century artists, who in turn contributed to the dissemination of information about the Orient.

At the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Americans and foreigners had full exposure to aspects of Japanese culture, design and

³⁴ For a more detailed account of these and similar periodicals see Weisberg, "Japonisme: The Commercialization of an Opportunity," in Japonisme Comes to America, Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1990), pp. 26-30.

architecture in exhibitions featured in the Palace of Fine Arts, the Horticultural Building, the Forestry Building and in an exhibit along the midway where a Japanese teahouse had been constructed.³⁵ Maurer, along with his mother and his sister Eugenia, were among the untold legions of individuals who made pilgrimages to the World's Columbian and enjoyed first-hand experience of the fascinating displays on view there.

Beyond such fairs, further knowledge about Japanese art and culture was provided by staunch supporters and outspoken advocates like the French dealer Siegfried Bing, the connoisseur and educator Ernest F. Fenollosa, and interested entrepreneurs like Charles Freer. Artists, including Whistler and those associated with the pre-Raphaelite circle in England, as well as the Americans John LaFarge and Robert Blum, also significantly contributed to the propagation of knowledge about Japanese art.

The mass appeal of Japanese culture, its art and objects, held particular allure to turn-of-the-century Americans because it represented something new and exotic. As art historian Gabriel P. Weisberg has noted, designers played an influential role in spreading the vogue for Japonisme because they helped to make Japanese art and objects fashionable among society "people with money were buying it, setting the trend. Tiffany's

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

artists and craftsmen were eclectic in combining decorative styles of many countries, freely mixing European and Japanese aesthetic features. At a time when crafts in general were held in high esteem, the Orient was a fresh discovery.”³⁶

In light of this cultural and aesthetic phenomena, it is not at all surprising that paintings such as Maurer’s Woman in Kimono (fig. 35) An Arrangement (fig. 31) and Woman with Pottery (fig. 33) all of which feature Oriental objects and are infused with a Japanesque spirit, met with enthusiastic response in their day. These images clearly catered to the fashion for Oriental objects and actively contributed to the Japonisme craze. It must be stated, however, that Maurer’s paintings reflect contemporary fascination with a Japanese “mode” of style, rather than evoking any real sense of Japan; they feature Western models and maintain a Western appearance. Maurer drew upon Oriental objects for their design, sense of space, and aesthetic value, and used these sources as a means for revitalizing his imagery. Recognizing this very quality in Whistler’s work, Whistler’s biographer noted that “It was not the real Japan he [Whistler] wanted to paint, but his idea of it, just as Rembrandt painted his idea of the Holy

³⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

Land.”³⁷ And as Oscar Wilde once remarked, “The whole of Japan is pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people. . . the Japanese people are simply a mode of style, an exquisite fancy of art.”³⁸

Be this as it may, Whistler himself had first started to incorporate Oriental costumes, fans, screens, pottery and other such props into his paintings in the 1860s. He assimilated the principles of both Chinese and Japanese art into his work through the inclusion of these various objects as seen for example in Caprice in Purple and Gold: The Golden Screen (1864, fig. 36) and The Lange Lijzen of the Six Marks Purple and Rose (1864, fig. 37). These exquisite paintings, appointed with languid models posing amidst Oriental props, evoke an essence of Eastern thought and beauty. They ultimately communicate the decorative coherence of Oriental art, where distinctions between fine and decorative art are blurred.

Such aesthetic distinctions also serve to inform Maurer’s Young Woman in Kimono (fig. 35), The Peacock (fig. 34), and An Arrangement (fig. 31), all of which reveal the artist’s skillful handling of Japonisme-inspired subjects. The last of these works, An Arrangement—titled in the same evocative spirit as many of Whistler’s paintings—launched Maurer’s

³⁷ Pennell, The Life of James McNeill Whistler, p. 86.

³⁸ Art Nouveau: 1890-1914, edited by Paul Greenhalgh (New York and London: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), as quoted on p. 101.

career in 1901. This early figurative masterpiece was executed during a year-long visit to New York, during which time the artist Haviland Osgood of Chicago subleased Maurer's Paris studio at 19 rue de Daguerre.³⁹ Maurer won accolades and recognition on both sides of the Atlantic for An Arrangement. Between 1901 and 1902 he showed this painting in five significant public exhibitions, including the Carnegie International, where a distinguished jury that consisted of the renowned American painters John White Alexander, Thomas Eakins, Robert Vonnoh, and Winslow Homer awarded it the illustrious gold medal and first prize of \$1,500.

Maurer's friend Maurice Sterne (the artist best known today for his circa 1912 depictions of Bali) recalled "Alfie's" excitement about this particular painting. Maurer had just arrived in New York from Paris and was barely settled into his Manhattan brownstone "when he rushed into my studio and asked me to lend him a large canvas, as he had someone upstairs he had to paint." Sterne, who could not afford canvas in those days, gave Maurer a large gray cardboard and Maurer rushed upstairs with it. Taken with the resulting painting, Sterne advised Maurer to send it to the Carnegie

³⁹ Mahonri Young recalled that Osgood subleased Maurer's studio while he was in New York for the year. Maurer's work remained in the studio. As Young recalled "Harry gave me one of Alfie's starts which I had in my studio as long as I remained in Paris. The subject was a girl seated on the floor. She was wearing a grey dress. The composition was similar to his Carnegie Gold Medal picture, though not carried as far." As cited in Norma S. Davis, A Song of Joys: The Biography of Mahonri Mackintosh Young (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1999), p. 59.

International and recalled, “I had nothing to send so I gave him my entry cards... A few days later I saw his painting and admired it very much. When I pointed out to him that there was a bristle stuck to the paint and I tried to remove it, he became quite frantic. ‘It ain’t a pig’s hair he shouted—it’s one of mine from my chest—and I put it there on purpose for good luck.’”⁴⁰

An Arrangement stood out as an accomplished work of art at the Carnegie, and critics took notice of it and offered both praise and judgment. Noted art authority Sadakichi Hartmann remarked that he thought Maurer was “especially talented.”⁴¹ Charles Caffin, writing for Harpers’s Weekly, called An Arrangement “very clever but far from great” and wrote that it was “eminently a painter’s picture...entirely directed to securing beauty of tone.” Nevertheless, Maurer’s spontaneity and freedom of brushwork was, according to Caffin, “a very marvelous accomplishment.”⁴² On average, reviewers found Maurer to be a gifted painter. They complimented his technique and paint handling, but some questioned his motive. A critic for the New York Sun called An Arrangement a work that was “distinguished

⁴⁰ McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377, frame 244.

⁴¹ Sadakichi Hartmann, A History of American Art, vol. I (Boston: L.C. Page and Company, Inc., 1901; sixth impression, 1913), p. 252.

⁴² As quoted in Jerome Mellquist, The Emergence of an American Art (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1942, 1969 ed.), p. 176.

by style; painted with remarkable assurance” and prophesied that if Maurer could “develop his motives as strong as his technique, he will be one of our foremost painters.”⁴³ Another critic who called attention to Maurer’s questionable motive, also commented on the artist’s repeated use of evocative titles. He quite rightly observed that Maurer was creating paintings that were more concerned with formal aesthetics than with substantive content. This critic was clearly frustrated by Maurer’s repeated investigation of the same subject, right down to the model, whom Maurer apparently had represented in other similar works. Responding to the decorative nature of this painting, the reviewer snidely remarked:

Mr. Maurer seems to have solved the artist’s problem by using the title ‘An Arrangement’ continuously...Landscape or figure, how admirably it fits, and what a saving in name plates!... We recognize the same girl, the same shirt waist and skirt, and even the same wallpaper and carpet. It is all very good, however, and the values are well observed. One may object, nevertheless, to the poverty of idea, and we shall hope to see another model next time.⁴⁴

Alfred Frankenstein, who wrote in 1950 with the benefit of historical distance, seems to have observed most astutely what Maurer had accomplished with An Arrangement. When he reviewed the 1949 Maurer

⁴³ McCausland Papers, reel AAA, D379, frame 860.

⁴⁴ Unidentified and undated clipping from about 1902 in the McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 880. This reviewer’s comments, while not overwhelmingly generous, offer interesting insight regarding possible variations on this theme and indicate that Maurer used the title “Arrangement” for other paintings.

exhibition organized by Elizabeth McCausland for the Walker Art Center and the Whitney Museum of American Art, Frankenstein noted that in the paintings An Arrangement, Jeanne, and Gabrielle, Maurer was “pulling at the leash of the Chase-Whistler style.” He understood, however, that Maurer had “endowed their method with exceptional power and formal simplicity.”⁴⁵

After the excitement of the Carnegie, and before leaving New York in 1902, Maurer painted a group of portraits that featured hired models as well as his sister Eugenia, Roselle Fitzpatrick, and Fra Dinwiddie Dana. In May 1902, he returned to France, in a homecoming that was described by Maurer’s biographer as a momentous event:

Alfy returned to his beloved Paris. He was an old timer in the Latin Quarter, and now he was a great man, decked with honors, medals and cash. Alfy is back, the news spread through the studios of the Left Bank. The aspiring hopeful artists of the colony had heard of his great success in America. They were happy for him, and perhaps a little envious.⁴⁶

The fifteen hundred dollars Maurer had received from the Carnegie International clearly improved his financial situation (he was being

⁴⁵ Alfred Frankenstein, “A Review of the Local Galleries,” San Francisco Chronicle, September 24, 1950.

⁴⁶ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 70. Maurer celebrated his homecoming with his cronies Mahonri Young, Jimmy and Phil Sawyer, Leon Walden, and a few others, at a creamery on the rue Delambre.

subsidized primarily by his father during these years) and facilitated a studio upgrade for the artist. Maurer relocated to a new studio at 9 rue Falguière, in a courtyard set back from the street. This was a significant improvement over his previous ground-floor studio at 19 rue Daguerre. Mahonri Young described the formality with which Maurer ran his studio; it was “a place to work and for his own affairs...you weren’t expected to just walk in as you could in so many studios. There was no loafing there by friends who had time more than anything else. You were expected to have an invitation when you went there.”⁴⁷

The rue Falguière was located in the southern reaches of the Montparnasse section of Paris, in an area rich in artists’ studios and not far from the Montparnasse railroad station. Nearby, on the corner of the boulevard Montparnasse, was a regular “model’s market” where Maurer and others went to search for suitable subjects for their paintings. The rue Falguière was home to a number of studio clusters, and number nine seems to have been a particularly popular studio location for American artists. According to a listing from the American Art Association of Paris, the tenants there included Lucien Abrams, Richard Edwin Brooks, Robert Henry

⁴⁷ Mahonri M. Young II Collection, Archival Files. The author is deeply indebted to Norma Davis for directing her to this collection, which contains previously unpublished material.

Logan, and H. Maxwell. Letters from friends during Maurer's Paris days reveal that over the years, Edward Warren (Jimmy) Sawyer, Gangon (a Canadian), Charles (Shorty) Lasar, George Luks, and James and May Preston also had studios in the same courtyard.⁴⁸ William Glackens spent time with the Prestons at their studio at 9 rue Falguière, which was described by Ira Glackens, William's son, as a court called "Villa Gabrielle." It was surrounded by studio buildings with tall iron gates, which remained "closed at night and guarded by the usual dragon of a concierge. By day they were open and all would come and go. A hand organ grinder played interminably in the courtyard."⁴⁹

2.3 Towards a New Aesthetic

Once Maurer was settled back in Paris in 1902 after his year-long stay in New York, he continued to create imagery inspired by Whistler's aesthetics, but drew increasingly more on the example of Frans Hals, Diego Velázquez, and Edouard Manet—painters who had likewise affected the artistic trajectory of Maurer's colleagues Robert Henri, George Luks, and

⁴⁸ Phil Sawyer, "Reminiscent of Alfred Maurer," McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377, frame 238.

⁴⁹ Ira Glackens, William Glackens and the Ashcan Group (New York: Crown, 1957), p. 70.

William Glackens, among others. In addition to looking more closely at these painters, Maurer focused greater attention on the painting techniques and design motifs of such esteemed portraitists as John Singer Sargent and William Merritt Chase, whose figurative works were also indebted to the tradition of Velázquez, Hals, and Manet. Maurer continued to utilize Whistlerian pictorial devices in a limited fashion, but the quiet tone and poetic mood that had prevailed in much of his earlier work gradually gave way to new paths of expression as Maurer began to assimilate a range of eclectic sources into his imagery in unique ways. Through a composite of these sources, Maurer discovered a new direction in his figure painting.

It was around 1902 that Maurer appears to have executed paintings such as Woman in Interior (n.d., fig. 38), Young Woman with Fan (Figure Study) (c. 1902, fig. 39), and The Black Cape (fig. 23), captivating portrayals rendered with great freedom. The Black Cape, once owned by Lucien Lefebvre-Foinet (the owner of a well-known Paris art-supply store and a friend to many aspiring American artists abroad), is just one example of how Maurer artfully combined the pictorial strategies of Whistler, Chase, and Sargent, into a singular bold statement.⁵⁰ In this work, which was clearly

⁵⁰ According to correspondence between Elizabeth McCausland and Mr. Rene Lefebvre, (McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D378, frame 0039), Lucien Lefebvre-Foinet appears to have at one time owned several paintings by Maurer including a version of Le Bal Bullier and Jeanne (fig. 22). Information pertaining to Lucien Lefebvre-Foinet is not widely known. References to him, however, do appear selectively in the

intended for exhibition at the salon, Maurer united Whistler's delicacy of tone and elegantly restrained colors with a theatrical flair that characterized Sargent's paintings, especially his dancer depictions. Maurer showed his model in a full-length pose, situated in an austere setting that underscores the figure's importance within the composition. The viewer's attention is drawn to the subtle twist of the model's torso. The lines of her gown, which are delineated by rich swirls of white paint, flicker on the surface of the canvas and suggest a definite sense of movement. The fluid sweep of Maurer's brush and the white edge of the model's black cape, which writhes before our eyes, reinforce the sense of energy and movement that distinguishes this painting.

primary documents of numerous American artists who spent time abroad in Paris. Lefebvre seems to have functioned as somewhat of a liaison between these artists and the art establishments where they often exhibited. As Daniel Putnam Brinley recalled, "M. Lucien Lefebvre, who was the proprietor of an art supply store in that section of the Quarter, also acted as agent for the artists in handling their paintings to be submitted to the jury of the Salon shows." As cited in Elizabeth M. Loder, D. Putnam Brinley, Impressionist and Mural Painter (New Canaan, Conn: Published by The New Canaan Historical Society and the Silvermine Art Guild of Artists by University Microfilm, 1979), p. 6. The artist William Loring, writing in 1902 also mentioned Lefebvre: "The Salon – I shall hear next Monday. So I learned today. M. Foinet told me that it was a tremendous rush of pictures this year, and abominable the way things were thrown out. The new Salon has passed verdict, and many wry, wrinkled, disgusted pallid faces are to be seen on the street. You are allowed to send six pictures to that show." William C. Loring, Jr., "Paris is Wicked: A Boston Art Student in Paris, 1901-1902," as published in the Archives of American Art Journal 28, n.3 (1988): pp. 23-24. Further reference to the firm of Lucien Lefebvre-Foinet was made by such figures as Alfred Stieglitz and Marius de Zayas. As noted by Francis Naumann, "From the first exhibition at the Photo-Secession to the last one at the Modern Gallery, the packing and shipping of all the modern art works shown in these two galleries was made by the firm of Lucien Lefebvre Foinet, Paris. . . The Modern Gallery could not have existed without the collaboration of Monsieur Lefebvre, whose business was not mainly packing and shipping but the manufacture of artists' materials. The friendship and devotion of Mr. Lefebvre for artists, especially American artists, was a very long duration. It was at his shop that Whistler supplied himself with colors and canvas, and since Whistler practically all the American artists, modernists as well as academicians, who lived in Paris did the same." How, When, and Why Modern Art Came to New York by Marius de Zayas, edited by Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996), p. 126.

By 1904-05, Maurer was painting compositions such as Jeanne (c. 1904, fig. 22), Gabrielle (c. 1905, fig. 26), and The Black Parasol (Gabrielle) (c. 1904, fig. 14). These dynamic salon pieces unquestionably shattered the calm poetry and stillness embodied in Maurer's earlier Whistlerian portrayals.⁵¹ They represented a dramatic shift away from the subtle, low-toned color harmonies and tonal painting approach that Maurer had previously favored. The appeal of Chase's dashing brushwork had replaced the allure of Whistlerian facture. Maurer's figures now registered with a new solidity. They were grounded in the real world and were no longer sublime abstract symbols of poetry and mood.

Maurer was certainly familiar with Chase's pictures from early visits to the Tenth Street Studio Building where Chase had occupied a studio. He would also have had insight into this artist's work from his father Louis who had studied with Chase as well as from Fra Dana who too had been a Chase pupil. Maurer was sometimes referred to as one of Chase's students, but he does not appear to have ever formally trained under him. Although no specific relationship between Chase and Maurer has been documented, it is

⁵¹ The first time that references appear to paintings of Gabrielle and Jeanne is in 1905. Maurer exhibited at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in 1905, showing Gabrielle (#862) and Jeanne (#863). He also showed Mademoiselle Jeanne (#465) at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1905. This show opened on January 23, 1905, which means Maurer would have had to have painted Jeanne in 1904, leaving enough time to ship it for exhibition to America. Jeanne was awarded the gold medal when it was shown in 1905 at the "Internationale Kunstausstellung" in Munich. Maurer also exhibited Gabrielle (#221) at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1905.

more than likely that the two artists met at some point. Chase owned two of Maurer's paintings. He acquired Maurer's A French Café around 1901 and purchased The Rendezvous (see Chapter 3 for details) in 1905. His acquisition of these two pictures attests to his admiration for his colleague's work. Conversely, numerous paintings by Maurer reveal an aesthetic allegiance to this leading painter of the day. Many of Maurer's compositions resonate with respect for Chase's solidly rendered figures, brilliant bravura brushwork, fluid paint handling, and technical virtuosity.

Chase's influence on Maurer's developing style was evident early in the artist's career, but for years was largely overshadowed by Maurer's emphasis on Whistlerian aesthetics. An early instance of Chase's influence is readily seen in Maurer's 1897 Self-Portrait (fig. 8), an accomplished painting that reveals the dapper character of this spirited young artist. This composition, which represents a rare example of a dated painting in Maurer's oeuvre, is executed with noteworthy technical flair. It is painted with sharp raking light and with an emphasis on dramatic tonal effects. The light that floods into the room behind Maurer and casts a golden shadow on the wall is a pictorial device employed by countless artists since the Renaissance. The unidentifiable picture to the right of Maurer is another allusion to the history of art. It is here that Maurer signed and dated his self-portrait and thus he

asserted his artistic presence in a tongue and cheek way. Maurer presented himself in this self-portrait as an artist of serious conviction. He executed it the year he left for Paris to begin his journey as a professional painter.

Chase's importance to Maurer became noticeably more pronounced later in Maurer's career and is especially palpable in such compositions as the 1904 Carnegie Institute painting The Black Parasol (Gabrielle) (fig. 14). The Black Parasol (Gabrielle), executed with clear purpose, more than amply demonstrates Maurer's extraordinary skill in the arena of figure painting. It is artfully cropped and exuberantly painted in a rich and fluid brushwork that reads as an homage to Chase. It features a seated model garbed in a beautiful pale blue and white dress that glows against the dark neutral background. The design of the composition is organized with careful attention to cropping and dramatic lighting. Maurer anchored the picture in a series of diagonals that subtly guide the viewer throughout the work. The most notable of these is formed by the black umbrella the model holds, which echoes the diagonal of her shoulders, and is offset by the angle of the her hat, which is tilted in the opposite direction. Maurer obscured the carefully mapped-out construction of his composition by directing our attention to the balance, harmony, and rich paint handling that are the defining characteristics of this handsome image.

Another roughly contemporaneous figure painting by Maurer is Jeanne (c. 1904, fig. 22). This portrait was awarded a gold medal in 1905 at the Internationale Kunstausstellung exhibition at the Crystal Palace in Munich and was shown this same year at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts exhibition in addition to the Pennsylvania Academy. It was later featured in exhibitions in London, Bremen, and Venice. Jeanne is without question the artist's most sharply defined character study.

Although Maurer had painted Jeanne Blazy, the model for Jeanne, on many previous occasions, including in the Whistlerian salon painting The Midinette (Woman with Hat Box) (c. 1902, fig. 20), he had never before presented her in such a radical fashion. Here she is essentially reduced into a caricature of grand-manner portraiture.⁵² She is presented as conspicuously posed for artist and audience, portrayed as a coquettish, risqué, working-class woman. Maurer has rendered Jeanne's portrait in a brilliant display of dazzling brushwork and painted her likeness with remarkable freedom of expression.

Jeanne stands as a prime example of the type of unusual character study that so delighted Maurer. As this painting as well as Maurer's Woman

⁵² H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1994), p. 258.

in Black (Gaby?) (fig. 15) unquestionably reveal, Maurer in no way limited himself to representing beautiful, polite, passive entities merely designed for public consumption. Maurer proved to be unabashed in his embrace of unconventional characters and he relished in showing everyday people in an unexpected fashion. The artist's penchant for unidealized, alternative subjects was recalled by Mahonri Young who mused that his crony "liked best the girls who had a squint in the eye; were slightly cross-eyed or wall-eyed or had some distinguishing mark."⁵³ Works like Jeanne as well as Ballet Dancer (fig. 27), the latter of which depicts an ungraceful and inelegant, aged ballerina past her prime,⁵⁴ highlight this distinctive facet of Maurer's figurative work.

Jeanne in particular plainly challenges conventional notions of propriety. The model in this composition—shown donning a boa and straw hat ornamented with a taxidermed white bird—is presented in a direct confrontational stance. She sneers out at the viewer, her teeth amply exposed

⁵³ Collection Mahonri M. Young II, unpublished letter in Archival Files.

⁵⁴ According to Fra Dana, "The Ballet Girl was painted in Paris. I saw it there many times and wish I had been able to buy it...." Fra Dana McCausland Papers AAA reel D377, frame 304. Likely executed in 1904, a painting titled The Dancer was shown at the Carnegie Institute Ninth Annual International Exhibition November 4, 1904 to January 1, 1905. #178. See the exhibition chronology in the appendix section of this dissertation. "Among the newcomers is A.H. Maurer, a pupil of the National Academy, just returned from Paris, where his study was mostly the old masters in the Louvre. He is quite young and yet distinctly makes his mark in this exhibition, as he did last week in that of the Salmagundi Club. He shows a little study of a dancer in brilliant costume, tiptoeing before a dull wall, while a few objects help to fill up a rather Japanesque composition to assist in atmosphere of the picture and to introduce connecting notes in the scheme of color. For the way in which the subject has been seen and felt and rendered one hails it as a true artist's work." [Maurer scrapbook, McCausland papers, reel D379, frame 870.]

between painted lips. In a rather vulgar display, she holds a lit cigarette to her face preparing to smoke, clearly symbolizing her deviant disposition. As Barbara Weinberg has observed, “Women who were shown smoking in this era were usually individuals on the fringes of society – actresses, prostitutes, lesbians, degenerate society women, or ‘new women’ for whom cigarettes symbolized deviance. Smoking also carried highly charged sexual overtones. Men frequently described a cigar or cigarette as a lover....”⁵⁵

Jeanne’s provocative character was succinctly described by Elizabeth McCausland:

From the time Southworth and Hawes photographed the famous Lola Montez before the Civil War with cigarette in hand, to Maurer, perhaps no one had portrayed more engagingly a woman smoking. Jeanne is what the Victorians could only have called a minx, alluring as a kitten and as pettable.⁵⁶

Maurer’s daring and dramatic portrayal of Jeanne with a cigarette summons to mind such bold and forthright images as Frank Duveneck’s Whistling Boy. Although it is unclear precisely how Maurer would have known this earlier picture, Duvenenck’s paintings may have, along with the work of Frans Hals, Diego Velázquez, and Edouard Manet, served as an important model for Maurer and fellow Realists Robert Henri, George Luks,

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.261.

⁵⁶ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 83.

and William Glackens. These artists, with whom Maurer was friendly, painted figurative studies in a similar vein to Maurer in the first years of the twentieth century as exemplified by Henri's 1902 Young Woman in Black (The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago), and Glackens' 1904 Portrait of the Artist's Wife (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut).

Maurer's association with Henri and several of his colleagues can, in fact, be traced back to the period between 1898 and 1900 when Henri was in Paris for a two-year sojourn.⁵⁷ During this time, Maurer socialized with Henri and those artists in his circle, including Augustus Koopman, the Canadian James Wilson Morrice, James Preston, the illustrator Ernest Fuhr, and Emilia Cimino. Henri had a studio at 49 boulevard Montparnasse where he painted portraits and other figurative works. This was not far from Maurer's studio on the rue Daguerre.

Maurer and Henri were both drawn to Whistler's ethereal compositions early in their career, but like Henri—who came to be known as one of America's leading Realist painters—Maurer's interests broadened with time to reflect a more Realist sensibility. Both artists rejected the notion

⁵⁷ The exact date when Maurer and Henri first became acquainted is unknown, however, Henri and Maurer are known to have spent time together during Henri's 1898-1900 stay in Paris. As William Inness Homer has noted, "Although the Henris lived a restrained social life, usually avoiding the cafés, they often saw their friends James Morrice, Alfred Maurer, Miss [Emilia] Cimino, and the [Augustus] Koopmans..." William Inness Homer, Robert Henri and His Circle, p. 97.

of slavish imitation. They refused to flatter their subjects and eschewed superficiality. Henri may have begun executing his Realist compositions slightly prior to Maurer, but it is difficult to pinpoint precisely when Maurer first began working in this mode. It is clear, however, that both men were painting related scenes of everyday leisure contemporaneous to one another around the turn of the century. By at least 1904, they were also following a roughly parallel course and painting similar figurative works that were infused with a Realist spirit, as evidenced by Maurer's Jeanne (fig. 22) and Henri's Portrait of George Luks (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa), both of 1904.

Maurer and Henri's spontaneous and rapid brushwork, liberal use of black pigment, insistence on projecting a vitality and immediacy, and championing of unidealized types, clearly invokes their endorsement for the art of Frans Hals and Diego Velázquez. Velázquez' paintings, noted for their distinctive dark tonality, fluid brushwork, and overall virtuosity, offered important stylistic and compositional models to many nineteenth-century Americans, including Maurer, his fellow Realists, and the esteemed portraitists Whistler, Chase, and Sargent.

Early in his career Maurer would have had an opportunity to appreciate copies of Velázquez' and Hals' paintings at Chase's atelier in the

Tenth Street Studio Building where copies from the old masters were readily accessible for viewing. After 1897 when Maurer moved to Paris he could further admire the work of these revered masters on visits to the Louvre. It was common practice for artists to spend time at the Louvre studying the great painters and making copies of their work. While Maurer does not appear to have signed the copyist register at the Louvre at this point in his career, his colleague Henri signed this register in 1898 and replicated Hals' La Gaheimerme.⁵⁸ In 1895, even before Maurer was in Paris, Henri had organized an art school in the French capital and accompanied students to the Louvre to see original paintings by Velázquez. He encouraged his pupils as well as his friends to study this artist's work.⁵⁹ Henri and other Americans including Maurer also had access to copies of Velázquez' paintings in the collection of the École des Beaux-Arts. It is possible that they were even familiar with articles on this artist, such as the one published by Léon Bonnat in 1898 for the Gazette des Beaux-Arts.⁶⁰ Henri surely gained further

⁵⁸ Robert Henri signed the register book at the Louvre on April 18, 1898 indicating that he was copying this painting by Hals'. See #2384, register book, Archives of the Musée de Louvre, Paris, France.

⁵⁹ William Inness Homer, Robert Henri and His Circle, p. 94.

⁶⁰ For additional information on this subject, see Léon Bonnat, "Velasquez," Gazette des Beaux-Arts (Paris), March 19, 1898, pp. 177-182. For a recent discussion of the impact of Velázquez on American artists, see H. Barbara Weinberg, "American Artists' Taste for Spanish Painting," in Gary Tinterow and Geneviève Lacambre et al, Manet/Velazquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2003), pp. 259-307.

insight into Velázquez' work when he traveled to Madrid and made copies of this artist's paintings at the Prado in 1900.⁶¹ He shared these copies with colleagues back in Paris when he returned later that summer. Although there is no indication that Maurer himself traveled to Spain, he certainly would have benefited from Henri's recent contact with Spanish art.

Maurer and Henri also shared an appreciation for the forthright and painterly works of Frans Hals. Henri was particularly well versed in his knowledge of seventeenth-century Dutch Old Master work. He, along with Glackens, Koopman, and several others, had first hand exposure to examples by Hals during their travels to Brussels, Antwerp, The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam in 1895. Over the years, Henri was notably outspoken in his praise for Hals. He came to identify so closely with this artist that in letters to friends, he even linked his work directly to this Dutch master.⁶²

In addition to their enduring admiration for Hals and Velázquez, Maurer and Henri shared a common debt to Manet, an artist who had also drawn widely on the tradition of Velázquez. Manet, who in his day had been admonished for being the "apostle of the ugly and repulsive," was quite well

⁶¹ For a chronological account of Henri's career, see Bennard Perlman, Robert Henri Painter (Delaware: Delaware Art Museum, 1984), pp. 165-171.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

regarded by many American Realists, particularly Henri, who was variously referred to as the “Manet of Manhattan.”⁶³ Opportunities for Maurer to familiarize himself with Manet’s work were readily available. As early as 1895 he could have seen Manet’s Boy with a Sword (1860-1861) and Young Lady in 1866 (Woman with a Parrot) (1866) on view at the Metropolitan Museum of art in New York. A wider range of Manet’s pictures were also available to Maurer in 1895 at the Manet retrospective, which was held at the New York branch of the Durand-Ruel Gallery. Once Maurer was in Paris, he would have seen Manet’s paintings in a global context at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900. Moreover, excursions to galleries such as the Galerie Bernheime-Jeune, where Manet’s pictures were exhibited in 1903, would have strengthened the American’s familiarity with Manet’s working methods.

Manet’s painting technique and method, as well as his frank and direct approach to subject matter had inspired Maurer as early as around the turn of the century. Manet’s influence was already evident in such early works as Maurer’s The Town Crier (c. 1902, fig. 7). This humanistic portrayal seems to have been directly informed by Manet’s 1875

⁶³ Henri openly expressed his admiration for Manet. He had an opportunity to see a number of this artist’s works at the 1896 Manet retrospective at the Durand-Ruel Galleries in Paris. Maurer was not yet in Paris at the time of this exhibition.

composition The Artist (Marcellin Desboutin), which Maurer most certainly encountered at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900.⁶⁴ Beyond obvious stylistic links, such as the simple, monochromatic backgrounds set off against the fluid brushwork that brings the figures to life, both Manet and Maurer represented their subjects in the guise of beggar/philosopher types. In doing so, they continued the tradition of the images of antique philosophers offered by Velázquez in his seventeenth-century paintings Aesop (c. 1638) and Menippus (c. 1638) both at the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Maurer would have been intrigued by the way in which Manet celebrated the genre of urban characters in The Artist (Marcellin Desboutin) and related works. He painted the people of everyday life and presented them in a direct manner. He was not afraid of capturing the ignoble character of a given subject. The Frenchman's works were infused with a sense of immediacy. They directed attention to the impact of paint. They dispensed with superfluous detail and used simple forms that evoked the essential nature of the subjects depicted. Manet's unabashed approach to figure painting surely appealed to Maurer who would have recognized that Manet represented a modern alternative to the art of figure painting. Manet gleaned

⁶⁴ Manet's The Artist (Marcellin Desboutin) was listed as no. 446 in this exhibition.

from art historical precedents, but he transcended the past and created paintings that were unmistakably modern in content and technique.

While Maurer and Henri's figurative work must be understood contextually in relation to such influential models as Manet, Hals, and Velázquez, their paintings should not be taken as a mere replication of any one artist's work. Both Maurer and Henri, as well as other fellow American Realists were involved with the art of the old masters, but they were fully cognizant that they needed to reformulate and update the concept of figure painting to reflect the spirit of their own times. They understood that it was crucial for art to be an expression of their individuality and that it was vital that they project this in their work.

Over the years, Maurer and Henri presented their figure paintings in major national and international exhibitions. They displayed them in a number of the same exhibitions, including annual shows at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Carnegie Institute, as well as in exhibitions sponsored by the Society of American Artists. They also participated in large expositions such as 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo and the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, the latter of which featured Maurer's Girl in White (fig. 24) and Henri's Lady in Black (1904, Parish Art Museum, Southampton, New York). While the two artists participated in a number of

the same large exhibitions, they appear to have only shown together in one intimately-scaled exhibit during the course of their careers. This was the 1901 Allan Gallery exhibition in New York, an important show that is discussed in detail in Chapter 4. At the time of the Allan Gallery commercial venture, Maurer was in New York on a year-long visit from the fall of 1901 until May 1902. He was painting figure studies rendered chiefly in a Whistlerian spirit and like Henri he was also executing scenes of contemporary leisure, transforming himself into a talented chronicler of the modern experience.

Chapter 3. Painter of Modern Life: 1900-1905

3.1. Introduction

In addition to painting fashionable figure studies, between 1900 and approximately 1905, Maurer became a chronicler of contemporary leisure. He focused a lens upon contemporary culture and created a body of engaging genre¹ work that documented his experiences outside the confines of his Paris and New York studios.²

Maurer's genre imagery was rendered in what might be characterized as a Realist style. It drew upon themes that had previously found exquisite form in the hands of such renowned figurative Impressionists as Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edouard Manet, Edgar Degas, and key Post-Impressionist artists like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.³ The paintings by these artists, once

¹ In *American Painting and the Politics of Everyday Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), Elizabeth Johns discussed the concept of genre painting and questioned its appropriateness as a means of classification. She found the term "genre" inadequate for simply characterizing "scenes of everyday life" because she posited that it masked important social relations and cultural constructions imbedded in American imagery. It should be noted that the term genre, as used in this dissertation, does not carry the same set of ideological implications proposed by Johns in her reading of antebellum scenes of everyday life. It is used here as a general categorization for Maurer's scenes of contemporary leisure. These works, which have a thread of narrative running through them, are quite unlike Maurer's more formal figure images, which typically depict solitary figures, often self-consciously posed for the artist and audience. Maurer's genre pictures were not invested with any specific moralizing content, nor were they constructed as a direct critique on the society he portrayed. His genre scenes were vignettes of contemporary life that were created from the perspective of a detached observer who recorded his cultural surroundings with balanced degree of curiosity and fascination.

² Maurer was in New York from 1901-1902.

³ Nick Madormo astutely asserts that Maurer was "consciously associating himself with a recognized tradition that included Auguste Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Edouard Manet...." Nick Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment" *American Art Journal* 15 (Winter 1983): 11.

radical to American audiences, had come into greater favor by the turn of the century and offered important stylistic and thematic precedents for diverse figures, including Maurer, the American Impressionists, and the American Realists.⁴

Maurer's depictions of contemporary leisure, although highly prized today, did not attract the same critical attention as his fashionable figure studies in the early twentieth century. Throughout the years, even after the artist's passing, Maurer's genre imagery was overshadowed by his other artistic endeavors. Indeed, the relative neglect of this work is discernable in posthumous exhibitions such as the 1949 Maurer retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art (and the Walker Art Institute), where genre paintings comprised but six of the eighty-one paintings on view.⁵ In 1973, when the National Collection of Fine Arts (now the Smithsonian American Art Museum) mounted its Maurer survey featuring ninety-eight works, only two genre scenes were included; a mere three were illustrated in

⁴ For a reassessment on the relationship between the French Impressionists and the American Realists or so-called Ashcan artists, see William H. Gerdts, Impressionist New York (New York, London, Paris: Abbeville Press, 1994), pp. 33-34.

⁵ Elizabeth McCausland, A.H. Maurer, 1868-1932 (Minneapolis and New York: Walker Art Center and the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1949).

the catalogue for this important exhibition.⁶ Disregard for Maurer's genre work continued unabated until 1983 when this otherwise forgotten chapter in Maurer's career was discussed in some detail in Nick Madormo's article "The Early Career of Alfred H. Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainments."⁷

Elizabeth McCausland speculated, probably quite rightly, that Maurer had painted hundreds of genre subjects in the early years of the twentieth century. Remarkably, less than thirty examples of Maurer's genre work are known today.⁸ In spite of this dearth of material, it is still possible to offer a more accurate measure of the artist's productivity as a genre painter than currently exists. This has been achieved in this dissertation by combing historical exhibition records for clues about the specific subjects Maurer

⁶ In addition to Evening at the Club and Le Bal Bullier, Maurer's Au Café, which is in the Collection of the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, was also illustrated in Reich's exhibition catalogue. See, Sheldon Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868-1932 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973).

⁷ Nick Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer," pp. 5-34. However, some of the dates that Madormo assigned to Maurer's figure and genre paintings have been reassessed in this dissertation after examining them in relation to historical exhibition records. For instance, Au Jardin, which Madormo dated circa 1907, should actually be dated earlier since Maurer exhibited this painting in 1905 at the Paris Salon. It is also necessary to revisit the dating of Le Bal Bullier, which Madormo puts at 1903. Le Bal Bullier was shown at the Paris Salon in 1903, and a painting by the same title—perhaps the same work—was also exhibited in 1902 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, thus offering proof of Maurer's engagement with this subject a year earlier than assumed by Madormo.

⁸ According to Elizabeth McCausland, after Maurer had returned to Paris from New York in 1902 "he worked away at figure studies and less academic genre subjects. He painted hundreds of these, but only a few survive." Elizabeth McCausland, A.H. Maurer: A Biography of America's First Modern Painter (New York: A.A. Wyn, Inc., published for the Walker Art Center, 1951), p. 75.

depicted and by collectively examining Maurer's scenes of contemporary leisure in thematic categories.⁹

Maurer's extant works, coupled with a survey of historical exhibition documents reveal that while the artist depicted everyday amusements such as artists copying at the Louvre (Copying in the Louvre, 1900, fig. 4),¹⁰ a game of shuffleboard (Evening at the Club, c. 1901-02, fig. 40), or a carousel ride (Carousel, c. 1902, fig. 41),¹¹ he was mainly drawn to portraying cafés, café-concerts, dance halls, street and sidewalk views, and seaside scenes. He rendered intimately scaled compositions like the beach

⁹ In organizing Maurer's genre work into thematic categories I have drawn on the example of Robert Herbert's Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society, which in turn, provided an important model for the 1994 publication and an accompanying exhibition American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915. See Robert Herbert, Impressionism: Art, Leisure, and Parisian Society (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988) and H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, distributed by Harry N. Abrams, 1994).

¹⁰ Copying in the Louvre was described in a contemporary French newspaper as expressing "very little in the subject, so far as ideas are concerned . . ." and as having an "admirableness consisting in the evidence that Mr. Maurer looks through his own eyes, with a vision essentially artistic, and that, although the impression is slight, he can impart it with precision." Unidentified clipping in McCausland papers also quoted in Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment," fn. 22, p. 33. Many artists depicted motifs featuring people at museums and galleries, including Honoré Daumier and Edgar Degas. Visiting museums was considered a socially acceptable form of recreation appropriate for all classes. Women could travel to museums unchaperoned without the stigma attached to some of their other unchaperoned social activities.

¹¹ Madormo and McCausland have both suggested that Carousel was painted just after Maurer's return to Paris in 1902. It shows working-class individuals in their Sunday best. It might be compared to some of Glackens' contemporaneous Manet-inspired scenes of urban entertainment. See Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment," p. 20. For additional information pertaining to this painting, refer to Hudson Walker Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 130, frames 1-54. Also see Elizabeth McCausland Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel D377, frames 1358-59; reel D384, frames 667-68.

vignettes of approximately 1901, and executed more formidable works such as Café Scene (c. 1904, fig. 42), a painting measuring 36 x 34 inches.

Maurer's scenes of contemporary life ranged in mood, tempo, and perspective. Nevertheless, certain commonalities link these diverse representations. In general, most of these paintings are primarily concerned with conveying the overall spirit of a scene at hand and were not rendered from a reportorial perspective. They tend to be suggestive rather than literal in nature and leave the viewer to piece together the painting's narrative. Beyond the few descriptive titles assigned to some of these works, there is little visual information provided about the specific places depicted [with the exception of Le Bal Bullier (1900-01, fig. 44) and Le Bal au Moulin Rouge (c. 1902-04, fig. 45)]. It was clearly not Maurer's goal to reveal a connoisseur's knowledge of each café, dance hall, beach, or Parisian boulevard.

In most instances, with the notable exception of Café Scene (c. 1900, fig. 42), where Maurer isolates and focuses on a single figure amidst the crowd, the individuals featured in the artist's genre scenes are distilled into generalized subjects. Maurer did not specifically champion the oppressed or highlight any particular ethnic group in these pictures. Furthermore, there is no evidence to indicate that he intentionally romanticized or distanced

himself from any class of individuals, although he was not especially drawn to chronicling the activities of the cloistered aristocracy. Maurer seems to have most enjoyed recording the leisure activities of the working class, middle class, and in rare cases, the upper middle class. Occasionally, he delighted in presenting unsavory characters on the fringes of society, as in Le Bal Bullier, where a group of women—likely prostitutes—are pictured carousing in the dance hall before closing time and engaging in behavior considered unacceptable for any proper lady. While Maurer portrayed a diverse population in his work, he was above all fascinated by the energy that was generated by the interaction between people and their environment.

Most of Maurer's paintings of modern life, with the exception of Evening at the Club (fig. 40) and a few known seaside scenes, were executed in France where the artist primarily resided from 1897 to 1901 and from 1902 through 1914. The curious magnetism of Paris proved irresistible to Maurer, who conveyed his enchantment with his Parisian milieu in the genre scenes painted in his newly adopted home. Paris, which the 1903 Pleasure Guide to Paris for Bachelors deemed “the metropolis of pleasure for the whole world,” offered Maurer an endless array of exhilarating subject matter

upon which to draw.¹² From the vast galleries of the Louvre to the cafés of the Latin Quarter and the seductive dance halls of Montmartre, the “City of Light” with its rich cast of characters and enchanting environs provided a colorful inventory for the American painter.

It was in Paris that Maurer first joined the legions of artists to observe the continuous performance of people at leisure. He indulged in others’ indulgences and recorded their unguarded moments as they danced, drank, read, contemplated, rode a carousel, or just passed time at a café. Some moments were gay and lively, while others were more reserved. This range in mood in Maurer’s depictions of modern life might be seen as corresponding with the general spirit that prevailed in fin-de-siècle Paris, which, contrary to the romanticized notion of the belle époque (the period spanning the three decades prior to the first World War), was a time of transition and turbulence. Although Paris was then widely considered the great pleasure capital of the world and was known for its lurid glamour, decadence, frivolity, and gay abandon, it was also a city marked by political and social upheaval, labor conflicts, and economic crisis.¹³ Like most

¹² The Pleasure Guide to Paris for Bachelors (London: Nilsson, 1903), vi. This is just one of many similar guidebooks that were available to Americans and other foreign visitors to Paris.

¹³ The tensions and conflicts of this period were fueled by profound poverty and crime, anarchist risings and bombings, and the failure of the Panama Canal venture. Another source of vast upheaval was the Dreyfus Affair, which divided France and spawned virulent anti-Semitism.

Americans, Maurer remained largely aloof from a great deal of this unrest. He did not use his art as a platform to directly address the troubles and pessimism that characterized the darker side of this otherwise ebullient era. However, it should be noted that select works by Maurer, including A French Café (c. 1901, fig. 46), Café Interior (c. 1904, fig. 47), and The Rendezvous (c. 1904, fig. 48), do indeed reflect a certain dispirited element common to the period. This dispirited quality is communicated through a heightened sense of alienation and melancholy that runs through these works as a leitmotif. Maurer effectively communicated this mood through somber low-keyed colors and through compositional devices that emphasize a sense of disconnection between figures portrayed. In these specific paintings, figures are shown in the company of one another, yet they appear very much alone.

Maurer's depictions of urban leisure were an extension of the general focus on leisure time that resonated throughout Paris after its transformation under the Prefect Baron Haussmann, whom Napoleon had appointed in 1853. Working under Napoleon III, Haussmann remodeled medieval Paris, cut through the streets of the city, and opened up new boulevards to create modern Paris.

Completed in the 1870s, Haussmannization reigned in monumental social and economic changes in France. Although it had the adverse effect of driving many of working-class means out of their neighborhoods and was criticized for its marginalization of the poor, it paved the way for increased commerce and leisure and a new sense of freedom in the French metropolis. Haussmannization created new districts and boulevards, which increased mobility and flow of traffic, and thus provided broader access to public spaces. It both literally and figuratively altered the appearance and spirit of the city.

The changes in Paris' topography stimulated the development of a host of cafés, squares, restaurants, cafés-concerts, hotels, and theaters. The presence of these various entertainment establishments reflected the increased prominence of a new leisure culture and supported the view that leisure was no longer considered a privilege, but understood as a given right.

The Impressionist painters working at the time took special interest in this burgeoning leisure culture and represented it in its various guises in the imagery they produced. Their diverse visual accounts reflected the tenor of the times: its history, people, and places. The themes and motifs they explored, such as the world of the café, café-concerts, music halls, opera, circus, and popular balls, provided a glimpse into the ever-increasing

prominence of the wide spectrum of leisure activities enjoyed by French and foreigners alike. The figurative Impressionists, and later the Post-Impressionists, chronicled Paris' rapidly expanding entertainment network in diverse ways. Their paintings served as important blueprints for Maurer who portrayed Paris as nothing short of a theater itself.

3.2. The World of the Café

The subject of café life, which was popularized by the French figurative Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, held great appeal for a number of American artists. Among the most talented American practitioners to immortalize the café experience were William Glackens, Everett Shinn, and Alfred Maurer. Maurer was decidedly fascinated with this subject and investigated it in numerous compositions around the turn of the century. Visual source material for his café imagery came from his real life experiences in the world of the café, as well as from thematic precedents found in the work of the figurative Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, artists especially fascinated by the theatrical nature of café life.¹⁴

¹⁴ From 1875 onward, café, brasserie, and café-concert motifs occupied an important place in the work of the figurative Impressionists. Edouard Manet, for instance, expressed a deep interest in the psychology of café goers and highlighted such social novelties as women serving beer in cafés, which was then a rather unusual phenomenon. Edgar Degas relayed his particular fascination with the ambience of café life in such poignant paintings as The Glass of Absinthe (1876, The Louvre, Paris) and Women on a Café Terrace, Evening (1877, Musée d'Orsay). These works were often informed by a sardonic wit. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec discovered the rich possibilities afforded by dramatic electric stage lighting.

Maurer's interest in portraying the world of the café reflects the central role that the café played in Paris around 1900, when Maurer was painting there. For Parisians and foreigners alike, the café was a fixed point in the French universe. It was one of the primary places where people gathered outside of work and home—an arena that provided all of society with a spectacle-like display. In 1900, nearly three decades after the completion of Haussmannization, there were some 27,000 cafés operating throughout Paris—an all time record for the city.¹⁵ In conjunction with wine shops and cabarets, cafés equipped Paris with a greater number of drinking locales than could be found in any other major city throughout the world.¹⁶

Parisian boulevards were saturated with cafés in 1900 when Maurer was living on the rue Daguerre. There was nearly one café for every two buildings at this time.¹⁷ The boulevards were lined with these establishments that literally thrust their patrons into the streets, situated them before a

A regular at the Montmartre dance halls from the 1890s on, Lautrec used lighting to emphasize the varied character of the creatures that populated cafés and other Parisian haunts. His paintings, which are remarkable as social critiques, were often populated by barmaids, waiters, washerwomen, shopgirls, and singers.

¹⁵ Charles Rearick, Pleasures of the Belle Epoque: Entertainment & Festivity in Turn-of-the-Century France (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 28.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For an account on the history of the café in nineteenth-century France see Susan Barrows' essay, "Nineteenth-Century Cafés: Arenas of Everyday Life," in Pleasures of Paris: Daumier to Picasso, edited by Barbara Stern Shapiro (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1991), pp. 17-27. See also W. Scott Haine, The World of the Paris Café: Sociability Among the French Working-Class, 1789-1914 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

constantly changing crowd, and provided them with an endless spectacle.¹⁸

The boulevard café was, as one foreign visitor to Paris announced, “a reserved seat in the street, a sort of comfortable sofa-corner in the great common parlor.”¹⁹ This atmosphere provided Maurer with a key place to study the public enjoying the pleasures of modern life. This urban gazing, in turn, supplied rich subjects for his paintings.

The café in its myriad forms functioned as a theater of everyday life, a key place to observe and be observed. Associating one’s experience at a café with a theatrical display was not uncommon for the period. Parallels to this effect were noted in contemporary guidebooks and newspapers and resonated in the art of the day as well.

The intermingling of various social classes at cafés and café-concerts as well as the interaction (or lack thereof) between Parisians and foreigners, certainly appealed to Maurer who would have relished the opportunity to study the public at play during visits to such cafés as the Closerie des Lilas, Lavenue’s, Café d’Harcourt, and Café du Dôme.²⁰ Lavenue’s was located in

¹⁸ Vanessa R. Schwartz, Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1998), p. 22; Barrows, “Nineteenth-Century Cafés: Arenas of Everyday Life.”

¹⁹ Schwartz, Spectacular Realities, p.23. See also Richard Kaufman, Paris of To-Day cited in Shapiro, ed., Pleasures of Paris, p.49.

²⁰ These cafés were generally places frequented by Americans and are often mentioned by many of the artists with whom Maurer was acquainted in Paris.

a hotel near the Montparnasse railroad station and was recorded by Richard Miller in his painting Café Lavenue, Paris (c. 1906-1910, Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, Jacksonville, Florida). The Café du Dôme, on the rue Delambre was an especially popular meeting place for American and German artists. According to the American artist Abel Warshawsky, it was a setting where meeting one's fellow craftsman, talking shop, and exchanging ideas, were the main diversions. As Warshawsky observed:

Paris and café life is no place for the weak. But for those who had the proper moral fiber, the Dome [sic] was a great and valuable experience. It was a school of good fellowship and a leveler of values. Not only did it give the young men an opportunity of meeting on informal terms men who had "arrived" in their art, but it also showed the latter from their very human sides. To hear the "big fellows" talk as humbly and often as discouragingly about their own accomplishments as the merest tyro was in itself a valuable moral lesson to the beginner that there is no easy going for those who are earnest about their art.²¹

Across from the Café du Dôme was a small restaurant called la cremerie du St. Bruneau.²² Mahonri Young, undoubtedly accompanied by his good friend Maurer, spent time at this family-run establishment whose

²¹ Abel Warshawsky recollections were recorded in Mahonri Young's "Reminiscences," Collection Mahonri M. Young II. They are also cited in Norma Davis A Song of Joys: The Biography of Mahonri Mackintosh Young (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1999) p. 57.

²² Cremeries were extremely popular in the Latin Quarter. Inexpensive meals and simply cooked dishes were served in these places, which also specialized in dairy foods. As Norma Davis notes in her study on Mahonri Young: "The streets around Montparnasse were lined with cafés and small restaurants known as cremeries, where during the noon hour and evenings, artists, students, and models gathered. Certain cremeries were favored by women students, others by men. Some became the meeting place for particular nationalities or for students who had mutual artistic intertests." Davis, A Song of Joys: The Biography of Mahonri Mackintosh Young, p. 56.

owners hailed from Auvergne. As Young remembered, “Papa sat behind a counter which ran along the left side. ‘Maman’ was generally seen moving back and forth between the kitchen and the rooms, joking and laughing as she supervised the work. The oldest daughter Jeanne, an attractive and popular woman of about twenty, was the waitress.”²³

During Maurer’s café excursions, he took notes and made sketches for paintings he would later work up back in his studio. He was often accompanied on these outings by his friend Fra Dana, who recalled that Maurer would carry a little sketchbook with him in which to record his observations. “[I]f we were in a café he would sketch the interior, so that he would know how to lay out his canvas and write in the colors he saw... The next day he would paint the scene by daylight.”²⁴ Mahonri Young further elucidated upon Maurer’s working methods during these early years:

During the first part of the time I knew Alfy in Paris he was a systematic hard worker... He made a habit of working half a day. When things went well he was a phenomenally fast worker—some of those full life figures of girls and women, were done in one science [sic]. One, I remember he told me he had painted it in seven hours. Usually he painted from models but he developed, at that time, two other methods of work. One was, from notes—hardly sketches—he did from memory, subjects he had observed in and around Paris. One

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Elizabeth McCausland Papers (Fra Dana Correspondence), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel D377, frame 306.

very successful one, he got from the Bal Bullier. There were a number of these. The other method was to prepare several tones and paint night scenes direct from the subject. It was necessary to have some of the tones prepared in daylight as at that time Paris was still largely lighted by gas and the yellow gaslight made it hard to distinguish some of the tones and colors. With modern electric light it is not so necessary. He did some very interesting and delightful panels in this way. These were painted in a small oil sketch box on wood panels.²⁵

Young also remembered that in 1902 Maurer showed George Luks his system of painting at night. According to Young, Luks, who was a member of Henri's circle, "did some bully things very like Alfy's but not as skillful or as finely observed or as original in point of view."²⁶

Maurer first began recording the subject of café life around 1900 and within a year, he was exhibiting café representations in public exhibitions.²⁷ The paintings that he crafted on this theme do not offer detailed inventories of the comestibles served at such places, nor do they present the viewer with carefully delineated portraits of the individuals at these establishments. Rather, they focus on distilling the general tenor of the environment depicted. They tend to be rendered from the perspective of a spectator or

²⁵ Collection Mahonri M. Young II, Archival Files.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ The first café picture that Maurer publicly exhibited in a major exhibition was Café in Paris. It was shown at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts January 14–February 23, 1901. For a more comprehensive exhibition history of Maurer's café imagery see Chapter 4 "Early Exhibitions and Recognition," and see the Exhibition Chronology in the appendix of this dissertation.

passive observer, rather than from the vantage point of an active participant. Maurer often assumed the role of *flâneur* in these compositions, and delighted in the spectacle of modern life, which he observed from the edge of a scene with a sense of curious detachment.

This element of removal and distance was presented by Maurer in his work in several ways. One was by highlighting a psychological remoteness between figures portrayed. Another was by underscoring the artist's physical distance from the subject being depicted. In each case, specific compositional devices were used to achieve this distancing effect.

Two paintings marked by this aspect of detachment and aloofness are Maurer's Paris Outdoor Café (c. 1900, fig. 49) and A French Café (c. 1901, fig. 46), sometimes referred to as Café in Paris or The Grogg Shop. In each, Maurer has presented a woman seated alone in a café, unaccompanied by a male on her evening excursion. This subject of lone women out in public was one that Maurer revisited several times in his work. He was clearly fascinated by this kind of impropriety and all that it suggested, much in the same way he had been interested in portraying unidealized female types in figure paintings such as Jeanne (fig. 22). Maurer represented women unaccompanied on evening outings in such paintings as Le Bal Bullier (fig. 44), Le Bal au Moulin Rouge (fig. 45), Café Scene (fig. 42), and Café

Interior (fig. 47). In his exploration of this theme, Maurer was drawing on the thematic and stylistic examples of artists like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Edgar Degas.

In Paris Outdoor Café (fig. 49) the principal figure, pictured in blue shirtwaist and black skirt, is seated at a small round table in the center of the composition and removed from the more populated areas of the café. Her distance from other café patrons is quite distinctly noted by the artist. The vacant chair adjacent to this figure indicates that there is room for another person; however, the figure is shown with her back to the open chair, and this less-than-inviting gesture prohibits comfortable entry into her space. Beyond this woman is an individual immersed in reading an indistinct newspaper—a popular café diversion.²⁸ Maurer directs the viewer to the other individuals in the background through a sort of zig-zag pattern, which begins with the open chair at the left and terminates with the simple patches of color used to suggest figures at the far left of the composition. Small splashes of bright red paint used in the figure's hats throughout the picture guide the viewer along this path.

²⁸ Nineteenth-century café depictions often featured café patrons reading newspapers and journals. See for instance Manet's Woman Reading at a Café (1879, Art Institute of Chicago). These journals often featured articles about the spectacle of the street and in the words of one historian, "As much as display windows, hotels and cafés, the newspaper became a fixture of and transmitter for boulevard culture." Schwartz, Spectacular Realities, p. 30. Many popular newspapers gleaned material from a broad spectrum of contemporary entertainments and offered accounts of Parisians at leisure.

In A French Café (fig. 46) Maurer directs our attention to the numerous unoccupied tables adjacent to the central figure to reinforce her separation from the other customers. In a clever twist, he abruptly crops the composition on the right in such a way as to eliminate potential drinking companions, thus posing the question—is this woman drinking alone? The specific narrative content remains open for viewer interpretation.

Both A French Café and Paris Outdoor Café (fig. 49) were likely inspired by scenes that Maurer had personally encountered.²⁹ Each is painted in the artist's characteristic low-toned manner, but A French Café is particularly restrained in its use of color and consists mainly of olive tones, areas of black, and touches of red. The somber palette in A French Café as well as in Maurer's Café Interior (c. 1904, fig. 47) accentuates the melancholy element that informs these paintings.³⁰ Maurer's use of perspective draws heavily upon the type of Japanese design elements Degas had used in the construction of his café scenes, such as Absinthe (1876, Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

²⁹ See fn. 24 and fn. 25 of this chapter for reference to Maurer's working methods.

³⁰ Madorno points out the sense of melancholy in this painting and notes that this element becomes a theme in Maurer's café scenes. See Madorno, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment," p. 9. While this is generally true, several café paintings such as Au Café and Au Jardin resist such categorization.

William Merritt Chase acquired A French Café for his private art collection probably shortly after it was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1901. Elizabeth McCausland suggested that Chase may have purchased this painting directly from Maurer on a visit to the artist's Paris studio, but there is no direct evidence to support this claim.³¹ In addition to A French Café, Chase also acquired Maurer's The Rendezvous (fig. 48) after it was exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1905.³²

Chase was a discriminating collector who bought works that influenced his own artistic development as well as those that reflected his impact on other artists. His extensive collection of approximately five hundred objects was comprised of diverse examples of both European and American art. It copiously reflected the artist's particular interest in the work of his American contemporaries, among them J. Carroll Beckwith, John H. Twachtman, Ernest Lawson, Robert Blum, Thomas Wilmer Dewing, and J. Alden Weir.³³

³¹ See McCausland, A.H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 42.

³² Ronald Pisano, In the Company of Friends (Southampton, N.Y.: The Parrish Art Museum, 1978) p. 28.

³³ *Ibid.*

The two paintings by Maurer that Chase acquired remained in his possession until 1912, at which time his entire collection was offered for sale. It is unclear whether A French Café did not sell at the auction of Chase's collection or whether sometime between 1912 and 1917 Chase purchased the painting back again; it was not uncustomary for Chase to buy back works that he had previously sold. A French Café was finally de-accessioned in Chase's 1917 estate sale where it was listed in the catalogue as #142 "Café Scene, Latin Quarter." According to the American Art Annual 1898-1932, it sold for \$130, while The Rendezvous, listed as #142, sold for \$175.³⁴ An old label affixed to the verso of A French Café indicates that at one point this painting hung in Chase's dining room, a privileged placement that reflects Chase's admiration for Maurer's painting.³⁵

Chase was not the only early collector to acquire Maurer's scenes of modern life. Ivan S. Morozov, the well-known Russian collector of Matisse and Picasso's work, also took special interest in these vignettes of daily life and purchased Maurer's Au Jardin (c. 1905, fig. 50) and Au Café (c. 1905,

³⁴ McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 925. This painting was purchased by Roy Megargel of New York directly from the Chase Collection. Mr. Megargel had known Maurer in Paris. See McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D378, frame 43.

³⁵ Information provided in an inventory entry of this work by Arlene Nichols of Hirschl & Adler Galleries, New York. A French Café was owned by Hirschl & Adler until 1999 at which time it was acquired by Hollis Taggart Galleries, New York for the exhibition "Alfred H. Maurer: Aestheticism to Modernism." It was then sold in 1999 to a New Jersey collector.

fig. 51).³⁶ Sheldon Reich has suggested that Morozov bought these paintings when he and fellow Russian collector S. I. Shchukine met Maurer at Leo and Getrude Stein's apartment sometime in 1905 or 1906.³⁷ However, Nick Madormo noted that Morozov often bought paintings directly from artists and he speculated that Morozov may have acquired these on his own, after he came into contact with the artist somewhat earlier than 1905.³⁸ After 1918, Au Jardin and Au Café entered the Museum of Modern Western Art in Moscow, and since 1948 they have been in the collection of the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad.

The dispirited tone that Maurer introduced in such café representations as The Rendezvous and A French Café is noticeably absent from both Au Café and Au Jardin. Au Café in particular is distinctive in its documentary character. As Elizabeth McCausland observed, the “ornamented women's hats, napkins tucked around the neck, oval platters of hors d'oeuvres, indoor-outdoor café architecture, garden setting, a woman's

³⁶ Madormo assigned a date of circa 1907 to Maurer's Au Jardin. However, according to exhibition records, the artist displayed a painting called Au Jardin in 1905 Paris Salon. Thus a circa 1905 date is more appropriate for this work. See the Exhibition Chronology in the appendix of this dissertation. Madormo, “The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment,” p. 31.

³⁷ Sheldon Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868-1932 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press for the National Collection of Fine Arts, 1973), p. 29, fig. ref. 14.

³⁸ Madormo's suggestion is tantalizing, but it has not been substantiated. See Madormo, “The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment,” fn. 40, p. 34; see F. N. Sergei Makovskii, “Frantsuzskie khudozhniki sobraniya I. M. Morozova,” Apollon, nos. 3-4 (1912): 5-16.

fitted gored redingote and plumed hat” of Au Café” all show the *face* of a period.”³⁹ Rendered in a panoramic fashion and from a sharp angular perspective, Au Café features a row of fashionably attired ladies painted by Maurer in a bravura manner. This ambitious composition is related to The Rendezvous, but the concept is grander and more adventurous.⁴⁰

The clear and linear sense of order that prevails in Au Café is replaced in Au Jardin by a diffusely patterned treatment of subject. Painted from above the picture plane, Au Jardin is rendered in a free and almost crude manner with little attention to detail. Figures are shown congregating in a lush garden space with no specific focal point delineated by the artist. Where Au Café is quiet and even static, Au Jardin is animated and inclusive.

Au Jardin has been identified as Maurer’s last known café painting. It represents the culmination of one facet of Maurer’s work while it also forecasts the next.⁴¹ The juxtaposition of styles and perspectives in this painting conveys a certain aesthetic ambivalence on Maurer’s part, as he was attempting to break through to modernism. Maurer was on his way to

³⁹ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, pp. 82-83.

⁴⁰ See Madorno, “The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment,” p. 27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

embracing a Post-Impressionistic aesthetic, and by about 1905 this change of course was already evident in such brazen portrayals as Jeanne, which Maurer displayed at the 1905 Paris Salon along with Au Café and Au Jardin.

3.3. Café-Concerts

In addition to cafés portrayals, Maurer also pictured another staple of French life, the café-concert. This form of entertainment developed during the Second Empire and flourished during the Third Republic. At the turn of the century when Maurer investigated this theme, there were an estimated 264 café-concerts throughout Paris.⁴² This substantial number of cafés attested to the public's crusade for pleasure even in the face of an uneasy political and economic climate.

The café-concerts in Paris during Maurer's day ranged from simple cafés with small stages and singers to extravagant halls where exotic oddities entertained clientele and elaborate theatrical displays took place. Many establishments did not charge admission, but relied instead on the

⁴² Business at these houses of commercial entertainment had increased dramatically between 1893 and 1913. As Rearick notes, "From 1893 on, with fuller official recording of the café-concert and music hall business, the Paris statistics showed a very steady and steep growth in entertainment grosses—from 32,669,084 francs in 1893 to 68,452,395 francs in 1913." See, Rearick, Pleasures of the Belle Epoque, pp. 29 and 83.

consumption of food and alcohol for revenue. Others, however, such as the Moulin de la Galette, charged couples a small entry fee and ten centimes every time they danced.⁴³ The Moulin Rouge, one of the higher priced music halls that Maurer visited on several occasions, was a favorite among artists. It featured lavish revues and had big name billings.

With the exception of the very wealthy who often attended private clubs and held their own soirées, and those on the poverty line, who frequented café-concerts that catered to their specific lifestyles, most café-concerts were accessible to a wide population.⁴⁴ They had become a sort of melting pot that embodied the very democraticization of leisure. The interesting mixture of clientele in attendance at these halls inspired fascinating commentary. To be certain, the spirited subjects that Maurer encountered during his outings to such establishments inspired extraordinary paintings.

Though Maurer surely visited many café-concerts, only two can be documented. These are the Bal Bullier and the Moulin Rouge. Maurer made at least two paintings based on his experiences at the Bal Bullier. One

⁴³ Ibid., p. 91.

⁴⁴ Beyond the flashy better-known café-concerts were those that catered more specifically to the workers and the poor. Among these dance halls were the Père Lunette, the Bal des Familles, the Grand Concert de la Presse, and the Concert-Cluny.

remains unlocated and the other is in the collection of Smith College (fig. 44). Since he probably visited the Moulin Rouge numerous times, it is likely that he made multiple paintings of life at this establishment, but only Le Bal au Moulin Rouge (c. 1902-04, fig. 45) has been located.

The Bal Bullier was immortalized by many of Maurer's American contemporaries including Frederick Carl Frieseke, Maurice Prendergast, and Edward Redfield. According to a letter from William Glackens to Robert Henri, Redfield was "especially struck with a gray day effect in front of the Bal Bullier."⁴⁵ Henri himself painted Façade Bal Bullier—Night (location unknown) around 1897 and exhibited it at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1897. Glackens shared Maurer's appreciation for the painting techniques of the seventeenth-century Baroque artists Frans Hals and Diego Velázquez, and like Maurer depicted scenes of contemporary leisure inspired by artistic precedents found in the work of Degas, Manet, and Toulouse-Lautrec. Glackens painted at least two canvases of the famous Montparnasse dance hall; one was entitled Bal Bullier, No. I (1895, Terra Museum, Chicago) and was illustrated in Bookman in 1900.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ As noted by William Glackens in a letter to Robert Henri from around 1897. See Ira Glackens, William Glackens and the Ashcan Group (New York: Crown, 1957), p. 19.

⁴⁶ William H. Gerds, William Glackens (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), see p. 17 and p. 157, fn. 21. At one time this painting was at the Macbeth Gallery in New York.

The Bal Bullier, which was portrayed by diverse European talents, including Sonia Delaunay, Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard, and Pablo Picasso, was regarded as a palace of sin. It was located near the end of the boulevard Saint Michel at 33 Avenue de l'Observatoire and opened its doors in the 1840s. It was one of the most popular of its type, a veritable institution in the Latin Quarter. It hosted masked balls during Carnival time and featured Thursday galas that were attended by regular clientele. The Bal Bullier was described in contemporary American guidebooks as an imposing sight. As visitors entered through the cloakroom they came upon a broad stairway which led to the ballroom where they caught their first view of the great spectacle. The following contemporary account published in the 1903 Pleasure Guide to Paris affords insight into the experience at the Bal Bullier around the time Maurer was a visitor. It bears reprinting in full:

From the top of these stairs, the first look around will surprise the visitor. It is a most imposing sight: the enormous crowd continually moving, composed of ladies and gentlemen in all styles and colours of dress, the brilliant lights, and tasteful decorations all combine to astonish and sometimes bewilder, the beholder, especially if it his first appearance at the Bullier.

Descending the stairs, the ballroom is reached. The ceiling is somewhat low; the colonnades and arches form open alleys. On the left, close to the bust of the venerable Bullier, founder of the house, is the well proportioned band, governed by the famous maestro Conor. The music is choice and exquisitely rendered, and popular airs are much appreciated, the choruses being taken up by the assembled guests. A gallery runs entirely round the hall for the convenience of

such visitors who may only come as spectators, or whose desire to partake of refreshments, which are in great variety and well served.

Connected with the establishment is a shooting gallery, also an American billiard table, which are both well patronised. During intervals of the programme, and as a change from dancing, the visitors take themselves to the garden, which covers more ground than even the spacious hall.⁴⁷

By the early 1900s when Maurer visited the Bal Bullier, he would have been impressed by the building's red facade, high arched entryway, and sparkling lights. There was a broad stairway, which led visitors into a large galleried ballroom, adjacent to which were winter and summer gardens. These gardens were adorned with chestnut trees, terraces, and impressive colonnades and could accommodate extremely large crowds of up to several thousand visitors. The Bal Bullier spanned something on the order of 48,400 square feet.⁴⁸

Maurer represented this dance hall in paintings dating back to at least 1900. Over the course of his seventeen-odd years abroad he undoubtedly made many trips to this renowned entertainment center. According to a letter from William Glackens to his wife, Maurer was still visiting and enjoying

⁴⁷ George Day, trans. Pleasure Guide to Paris, (London and Paris: Nilsson & Co., 1903), p. 111.

⁴⁸ For additional information regarding the Bal Bullier and Maurer's painting of this establishment, see Elizabeth C. Evans-Iliesiu's catalogue entry in Masterworks of American Painting and Sculpture from the Smith College Museum of Art (New York: Hudson Hills Press, Inc., 1999), p.130.

the wild abandon at the Bal Bullier in 1912. Glackens recorded some of the details of one of his outings with Maurer [Alfy] to a masked ball there, and described the celebratory spirit in Paris around Mardi Gras. His words offer a rare glimpse into the social milieu in which Maurer was immersed:

Yesterday was Mardi Gras and I had the Brooks family and Alfy over to Marguery and gave them a good dinner. The boulevards were knee deep with confetti and jammed with crowds of people. The good citizens of Paris were enjoying themselves, young men and girls rushing around dressed in all sorts of costumes. After dinner we went to the Bal Bullier to the masked ball. Bare legs to the hips seemed to be a favorite costume among the girls, one of them also was bare footed. Perfectly filthy, but from the dirt of the floor. Chemises with apparently nothing else except shoes and stockings was another excellent disguise that two of them wore In fact there was an infinite variety of costumes and everybody was appearing to have a good time. . . . Alfy and May Brooks took the floor several times while Dick and I looked on from the balcony.⁴⁹

For Maurer's 1900-01 painting Le Bal Bullier (fig. 44), and perhaps those of the same subject that followed, he likely sketched in situ (as was often his practice) and later created the final version of the painting back in his studio.⁵⁰ It is not clear whether he completed this picture prior to leaving

⁴⁹ February 21, 1912 letter from William Glackens to his wife. As quoted in Ira Glackens, William Glackens and the Ashcan Group, p. 159. Glackens had come to Paris in 1912 to assist Dr. Albert Barnes of Philadelphia with purchasing works for his collection. He arrived in Paris on February 12, 1912 and the next day met Maurer. As he wrote to his wife, "I am to meet Alfy at one o'clock and he is going to introduce me to a Mr. Stein, a man who collects Renoirs, Matisse, etc." Ibid., p. 157.

⁵⁰ Elizabeth C. Evans-Iliesiu has suggested that Maurer executed the painting in 1900 and may have completed it before leaving France in 1900 for a visit to the United States. She also posits that he may have taken the painting with him to New York and finished it there. Evans-Iliesiu, Masterworks of American Painting and Sculpture from the Smith College Museum of Art, p. 130.

France for New York or whether he finished it during his 1901-02 New York visit.

Maurer constructed Le Bal Bullier in a frieze-like composition, deftly rendered with stylistic devices derived from art nouveau. The painting's pronounced linearity and its emphasis on sinuous forms is unmistakably linked in style to Toulouse-Lautrec's fantastic array of dance hall depictions. Maurer's Le Bal Bullier, which is marked by a distinctly enigmatic aura, is unlike any other known painting by the artist. From the foreground of the composition emerges a group of grotesque figures, perhaps prostitutes, who gather adjacent to two dancing couples shown arrested in motion.⁵¹ Lurking in the far distance is a silhouetted male in a top hat—an unusual omnipresent figure who further enhances the mysterious character of this genre scene.

Maurer exhibited paintings of the Bal Bullier as early as 1902, and between 1902 and 1904 showed images of this dance hall in at least four major exhibitions—one at the Paris salon, and three back in America.⁵² In

⁵¹ Female prostitution during this period commonly correlated with lone female cafégoers of questionable character. However, as one historian has noted, "Because the café had become one of the main spaces of male-female interaction, nineteenth-century working women were not afraid to go to a café even when they were alone. . . The vast bulk of all the primary judicial and social evidence indicates not only that women felt comfortable in cafés but also that they participated actively in café sociability." See W. Scott Haine, The World of the Paris Café: Sociability Among the French Working Class, 1789-1914 (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996) p.201.

⁵² Maurer's Le Bal Bullier was exhibited in 1902 and 1904 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and in 1903 at the Art Institute of Chicago.

1903, he presented La Dernière Danse au Bal Bullier at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts Salon and exhibited a work by the same title, but listed in English, at the Art Institute of Chicago. He showed a version of the Bal Bullier in 1905 at the Salon d'Automne in Paris and continued to feature Bal Bullier scenes in exhibitions through 1915, which attest to the popularity of this subject.

In addition to portraying life at the Bal Bullier, Maurer also captured the animated character of the Moulin Rouge in his extraordinary painting Le Bal au Moulin Rouge (c. 1902-04, fig. 45), Maurer's foremost depiction of contemporary nightlife. This famed French landmark besieged by Parisians and tourists was home to an array of salacious entertainment, including Moorish dances, vaudeville acts, clowns, belly-dancers, and singers. It was a nocturnal meeting-place where, for a few francs admission (ranging from 2-5 francs in 1900, depending on the day), everyone from the beau monde to the underworld assembled.

The Moulin Rouge ("Red Windmill"), otherwise known as the "temple of aphrodite," first opened its doors in 1889 and was located at 90, boulevard de Clichy in the Montmartre district of Paris. Long recognized for its artistic population, Montmartre was home to approximately 500 artists

between 1860 and 1910.⁵³ It was a thriving center of artistic innovation and a bastion of pleasure that drew artists, musicians, and intellectuals into its bohemian fold with magnetic force. Known for its low rents and sloping hills, Montmartre was also home to a multitude of entertainment spots such as the Chat Noir and the Moulin de la Galette. This district was a symbol of gaiety and bohemian life and was always bursting with literary and artistic energy. As the Frenchman Victor Meusy wrote in 1900, "When one speaks of Montmartre, this name evokes a world of painters, authors, journalists, poets, draughtsmen, and of songwriters."⁵⁴

Meusy captured the spirit of the Moulin Rouge in his 1900 publication Guide de l'étranger à Montmartre:

The whole world is familiar with the "Moulin Rouge" and its arms of light. The success of this unique institution must be explained by the incredible variety of the entertainments it provides to its audience...

A concert where the best artists are heard precedes the evening of dancing. Sometimes even a lively, witty revue of the year's happenings is played on the charming little concert stage. Then at 10 o'clock, the full orchestra plays its first notes, and the crowd of dancers swarm into the big hall, marvelously decorated. Now we find: dancers leading, gusty encounters where free rein is given to the

⁵³ Sylvie Buisson and Christian Parisot, Paris Montmartre: A Mecca of Modern Art, 1860-1920 (Paris: Terrail, 1996), p. 20.

⁵⁴ "Quand on parle de Montmartre, ce nom évoque tout un monde de peintres, de littérateurs, de journalistes, des poètes, de dessinateurs et de chansonniers." Victor Meusy, Guide de l'étranger à Montmartre (Paris: J. Strauss, 1900), p. 12.

cocky cheer of the beautiful women of Montmartre, enthralling waltzes and polkas - all so well suited to flirtatious ramblings.⁵⁵

The interior of the Moulin Rouge, which Maurer depicted in his painting of this subject, featured a large dance floor surrounded by galleries where spectators were free to watch and drink. There was also a garden with replicas of Spanish palaces where Moorish dances were performed. Situated in this garden was an elaborate plaster elephant acquired from the World's Exposition. It had a small stage in its belly where one of the belly-dancers regularly engaged customers.

Like the Bal Bullier, the Moulin Rouge inspired paintings by many artists of the day. The most prolific investigator of this site was Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901). Lautrec was a regular at this Montmartre dance hall and from the 1890s on tirelessly chronicled its dazzling displays in intoxicating pastels, posters, and oil paintings like the 1890 Au Moulin Rouge (fig. 52), which revealed his penchant for garish color. Lautrec's

⁵⁵ "De tous les bals célèbres de la Butte-Montmartre, un seul a survécu ou, pour mieux dire, sur l'emplacement de l'ancien bal de la Reine-Blanche, la baguette d'une fée s'est plu à faire naître un pays des Mille et une nuits, pour y placer le temple de Terpsichore. Le monde entier connaît ce *Moulin Rouge* qui tourne ses bras lumineux aux quatre vents de la joie et le succès de cet établissement unique s'explique par la profusion des attractions qui y sont réservées au public. Un concert, où l'on entend les meilleurs artistes, précède la soirée dansante; parfois même une alerte et spirituelle revue des événements de l'année est jouée sur la charmante petite scène de concert puis, à 10 heures, le grand orchestre fait entendre ses premiers accords et la foule des danseurs prend possession du grand hall merveilleusement décoré; alors ce sont des quadrilles entraînants, des vis-à-vis bouffes où la gaieté gouailleuse des jolies montmartroises se donne un libre cours, des valse captivantes et des polkas, si propices aux galants propos. Par les soirées douces de notre climat montmartrois, les jardins, où brillent mille feux, jettent pudiquement une voilette de feuillage sur les groupes amoureux et les fleurs se ferment de dépit de voir autant de jolies lèvres sur lesquelles fleurit le rire perlé de la parisienne. L'hivre, *les cortèges historiques*, qui sont une innovation du Moulin Rouge, attirent tous Paris artistes et amateurs." Ibid., p. 45-46.

images of the Moulin Rouge, some of which decorated the walls of the establishment, have become synonymous with the site itself.⁵⁶ His concentration on themes of nocturnal entertainment, which has a strand of Realism running through them, undoubtedly inspired Maurer who was taking stock of his social surroundings and formulating new ways of distilling the character of Paris and its people into his paintings.

Examples of Lautrec's work would have been readily available for Maurer to see in the French capital at the time. For instance, in May 1902, a year after Lautrec died, the Galeries Durand-Ruel hosted a large survey of the artist's work, with no less than two hundred and one pictures on view. This important exhibition featured many representations of the Moulin Rouge, including La danse au Moulin Rouge, La Goulue au Moulin Rouge, and Clownesse au Moulin-Rouge, to name just a few. It also featured a great many other café-concert and dance hall scenes that depicted other popular French night spots frequented by Lautrec like the Moulin de la Galette. The wide range of enticing contemporary leisure scenes in this exhibition surely captured Maurer's full attention, as did those on view at the 1904 Salon

⁵⁶ Paintings and drawings by café, cabaret, and dance-hall habitués often decorated the walls of these popular haunts. Charles Zidler, the proprietor of the Moulin Rouge, asked Lautrec to hang two of his paintings above the bar at the Moulin Rouge. He commissioned a poster of the Moulin Rouge by Lautrec in 1891. See Sylvie Buisson and Christian Parisot, Paris Montmartre: A Mecca of Modern Art, 1860-1920, pp. 76-78.

d'Automne where Maurer showed five paintings and where Lautrec was honored with a display of twenty-eight works, among them several images of the Moulin Rouge.

The garish complementary colors endemic to much of Lautrec's café-concert pictures likely inspired Maurer's own use of color in intrepid new ways. In fact, the bold palette Maurer used in Le Bal au Moulin Rouge (fig. 45) is almost inconceivable without the example of Lautrec's imagery. Moreover, the vivid colors in Maurer's rendition of this popular café-concert hint at the dominant role that color would come to play for him in the years ahead.

Maurer was not only influenced by Lautrec's unique palette, but was also likely impressed by the way in which Lautrec artfully relayed the wild energy that permeated the Parisian dance hall. He may have been following Lautrec's example in the way in which he seized and conveyed the excitement at the Moulin Rouge in his grand painting Le Bal au Moulin Rouge. This kaleidoscopic essay offers clear evidence of Maurer's flair for the dramatic. It illustrates his superior command of technique and reveals his ability at constructing complexly layered compositions. This spectacular commentary on Parisian nightlife specifically calls to mind Lautrec's Au Moulin Rouge (fig. 52), and also suggests a strong affinity with Manet's

famous Masked Ball at the Opéra (1873, fig. 53), a painting that Maurer presumably knew.⁵⁷ Though Maurer's image lacks the chic quality of the opera ball depicted by Manet, the two works equally draw one into the center of activity that fills the respective halls. Each in their own distinct manner offers a salmagundi of classes and conditions.⁵⁸ In both paintings, clusters of darkness formed by black-clad men and women are interrupted by brilliantly colored costumes that punctuate the dark areas of the composition. In Maurer's portrayal, strong black masses set against the broadly painted areas of bright color relay the dazzling vortex of excitement that filled this lively hall.

Beneath the immense scintillating chandeliers featured in Le Bal au Moulin Rouge are figures shown dancing in complete abandon to music provided by an orchestra that plays on a stage above the crowded dance floor. Women are shown kicking up their heels, perhaps doing the can-can, still a popular dance. As is typical of many of Maurer's café and dance hall scenes, the focus is on the spirit and tempo of the hall, rather than on

⁵⁷ Maurer could have seen a version of this work entitled Le Bal de L'Opéra (Bal masqué) when it was exhibited in 1895 at the Durand-Ruel Gallery in New York. It was later included in Théodore Duret's, Histoire d'Edouard Manet et de son (Paris: Euvre, 1902). For detailed information regarding Manet's exhibition history, see Denis Rouart et Daniel Wildenstein, Edouard Manet: Catalogue Raisonné (Lausanne: Bibliothèque des arts, 1975).

⁵⁸ Edward King, My Paris, French Character Sketches (Boston, 1868), p.78. As quoted in Herbert, Impressionism, Art, Leisure, & Parisian Society, p. 131.

individualizing those in attendance. The heart of the composition is not the orchestra who plays for the audience, but the theatrical display provided by the audience who seem to perform for our entertainment. This theatricality is disturbed only briefly by a woman in the foreground, a somber figure dressed in black who adds an unexpected dimension to this otherwise celebratory painting. The dispirited element that the inclusion of this figure introduces to the composition may be viewed as a real character, or as has been suggested, she may also be a symbolic figure that has been included to offer another dimension to the work that it might have otherwise lacked.⁵⁹

Maurer's range of talent as a chronicler of café and dance hall life is further revealed in Café Scene (c. 1904, fig. 42), a distinctive work noted for its carefully observed and sensitively rendered central figure. This portrayal is marked by a psychological intensity, which is most clearly communicated through the female figure in the foreground who engages the viewer with her direct stare. The particular attention Maurer lavished on this character, as well as those in her presence, results in a concentration on social behavior that is not typically found in Maurer's other genre work.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred H. Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment," pp. 10-11.

⁶⁰ Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. et al., American Impressionism and Realism: The Margaret and Raymond Horowitz Collection (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1998), p. 104, entry by Franklin Kelly.

The principal figure dressed in black remains aloof from the colorful crowd. She stands before us with brightly painted red lips and cheeks and holds a fan to her face in a suggestive gesture. Fans were not just used as fashion necessities but were also a stylish means of communication. For example, holding a half open fan near to one's lips suggested, "you may kiss me."⁶¹ Maurer offers the viewer an animated assortment of figures ranging from the small soldier garbed in a blue coat and brilliant red trousers to the lady in a brown dress who kicks up her heels in a most lively fashion. The presence of the soldier may indicate that the hall featured was one near to the *barrières*, which were often visited by the military.⁶² Beyond the crowd, and on the balcony, is an ensemble of onlookers who seem to spill forward onto the dance floor. The stairway pictured serves as a bridge between the two spheres. Maurer artfully weaves together the multiple stories that unfold simultaneously through the design of his picture. His use of startling color here as in Le Bal au Moulin Rouge (fig. 45) forecasts his embrace of it as an expressive tool.

⁶¹ This reference was taken from a brochure issued in conjunction with a small exhibition on the history of fans. Phyllis Prussin, "The Fashion of Fans," The Rye Historical Society, Rye, New York. June 19-September 19, 2001.

⁶² Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. et al., American Impressionism and Realism: The Margaret and Raymond Horowitz Collection, pp. 102-104.

3.4. Paris Street Scenes

Beyond the cafés and café-concerts, Maurer, along with other Americans, turned to the streets of Paris for inspiration. He was drawn to the odd characters and the ever-changing spectacle, all of which provided him with a variety show from which to draw upon in his imagery. Maurer was similar to many Parisians and tourists at the turn of the century who took to these streets as if it were a sport.

Maurer has been characterized as an “American colony Beau Brummell,” and a great man of the Latin Quarter.⁶³ He was a boulevardier, who would have promenaded throughout the city observing the pageantry of life. This was an activity common to the period and was reinforced by contemporary guidebooks such as Tableau de Paris (1893), and newspapers like Fin de Siècle and the Courier français.⁶⁴

Although relatively few street and boulevard scenes by Maurer are known today, exhibition records indicate that he did in fact execute a

⁶³ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p.77.

⁶⁴ In the late afternoon and evenings pedestrians piled up causing bottlenecks on Paris streets. Sidewalk cafés that lined the boulevards were so well patronized that they often pushed out into the streets, obscuring pedestrian passage. “[A]t 5’oclock the pulse of the boulevard quickened as strollers flocked to favorite places to take absinthe and apéritifs. At night the boulevards blazed with lights, and the cast changed. Dusk brought out what an English guide to Paris delicately called ‘nymphs of the pavé,’ promising additional pleasures off the street.” Rearick, Pleasures of the Belle Epoque, p. 170.

reasonable number of these motifs. As early as 1902 he exhibited a painting entitled Boulevard, Montparnasse (location unknown) at the National Academy of Design in New York. It would not be until 1908, however, that he would again show similar subjects back in America. Curiously, Maurer seem to have only submitted one such painting to the French salons. He preferred instead to use this forum for as a platform for his figurative works as well an occasional café scene.⁶⁵ With the exception of a vaguely titled work called Nuit, shown at the Salon in 1904, a painting mentioned in the English American Gazette, Maurer's exhibition pattern suggests that he was not painting street scenes primarily as exhibition pieces, but rather for his own personal delight.⁶⁶

One of Maurer's most distinctive street subjects is Street Scene, Paris (c.1902-04, fig. 54). This alluring image was most likely painted in the artist's studio, but was based on sketches he had made out at night in the manner described by Fra Dana and Mahonri Young.⁶⁷ It is a large, dimly lit

⁶⁵ Maurer showed The Rendezvous at the Paris Salon in 1904; in 1905 he exhibited Au Jardin and Au Café there as well.

⁶⁶ According to Marie Louise Kane, a critic for the English American Gazette reported "Alson Clark, A. B. Wright and Alfred Maurer show very good night pictures," in the 1904 Salon. See February 6, 1904 clipping from the English American Gazette, n.p., in the Alson Clark papers at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. As quoted in Marie Louise Kane, A Bright Oasis: The Paintings of Richard E. Miller (New York: Vance Jordan Gallery, 1997), p. 73, fn. 76.

⁶⁷ Refer to fn. 24 and fn. 25 of this chapter for specifics.

composition and one of Maurer's most enigmatic Parisian paintings. It is greatly indebted to the limited, subdued palette that Whistler used in his paintings titled "Nocturnes" and "Harmonies." Maurer, like Whistler, never painted night as pitch black, but instead rendered it in rich shades of midnight blue and in dark earth tones, as illustrated by both Street Scene, Paris and Paris Night Scene (n.d., fig. 55).⁶⁸ In both of these examples, Maurer used notes of bright color to lock in the composition and prevent it from dissolving into complete darkness. As was Whistler's technique in pochades such as Chelsea Shops (1880s or 1890s, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.), Maurer applied paint thinly, and scumbled color onto the surface of the canvas to reveal areas where a palette knife was likely used to scrape away paint and create texture. This technique, coupled with the dark palette used, reinforced the evocative character of Maurer's compositions, which relate stylistically to Glackens' circa 1895 images Bal Bullier, No. I (fig. 56), Outdoor Theater, Paris (fig. 57), and Circus Parade (Kraushaar Galleries, New York).

A number of Maurer's street subjects represent the boulevards of the Montparnasse district where he resided. They depict the busy thoroughfares

⁶⁸ The blur of movement and disconnectedness depicted in Maurer's Paris Night Scene stylistically suggests an affinity with John Singer Sargent's In the Luxembourg Gardens (1879, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania), as well as with some of Whistler's Nocturne paintings like Nocturne in Grey and Gold: Chelsea Snow (1878, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts).

of Paris including the boulevard Saint Michel and the boulevard Montparnasse, the latter of which was the subject of Maurer's Boulevard Montparnasse, Paris (location unknown), a work shown in 1902 at the National Academy of Design in New York.

The boulevard Montparnasse, which Maurer had taken as his subject, was at the heart of Montparnasse, an area considered second to Montmartre as a place for artists to live. The Symbolist artists and writers had put Montparnasse on the Bohemian map in the 1890s, and since then it was a haven for many creative types. After 1900 Montparnasse was considered a “free zone.” It was a place where the French state allowed police surveillance to be more lenient than other sections of Paris and where unconventional behavior was expected.⁶⁹

In addition to giving the boulevard Montparnasse memorable form in his work, Maurer also pictured the boulevard St. Michel in Night-Boulevard St. Michel (location unknown). Maurer's friend Robert Henri had also immortalized this subject in his 1898 painting Fourteenth of July—Boulevard Saint-Michel (fig. 58). Henri was drawn to painting vignettes of Paris after dark and recording the city in inclement conditions. Such

⁶⁹ Billy Klüver and Julie Martin. Kiki's Paris: Artists and Lovers 1900-1930. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), p. 11. As quoted in John Richardson's A Life of Picasso, Volume II: 1907-1917 (New York: Random House, 1996), p. 259.

meditations on this subject include his 1899 Boulevard in Wet Weather, Paris (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia), and La Neige, a winter street scene purchased by the French government for the Musée National du Luxembourg.⁷⁰

The boulevard St. Michel, painted by Maurer and Henri, extends from the Place Saint-Michel to the Luxembourg Gardens. It was described by contemporary guidebooks as the great rendezvous, or meeting-place, of all students. It was formed, along with the boulevard Saint-Germain, during the Second Empire and helped to change not only the appearance of the city but the spirit of the Latin Quarter as well. The boulevard St. Michel was known to attract large crowds:

...owing, not simply to the strange characters that meet there or to the tender scenes of love enacted by the youth of both sexes in their hours of, but to the well-appointed caf  s and restaurants where refreshments of all kinds may be obtained in moderate charges (for students have to practise economy) and where everything presents an attractive appearance. The small tables are well laid out and placed on the pavement convenient for all, and the menu suits well the limited means of those who use it. This place to many is the one bright spot in their hard, grinding lives.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Henri's American colleague Everett Shinn was another painter who created handsome Parisian streets scenes. He was typically drawn to the more quiet neighborhoods of Paris such as that featured in his 1902 oil painting entitled Paris Street Scene #1 (Vose Galleries, Boston).

⁷¹ George Day, trans., Pleasure Guide to Paris, p. 176.

Maurer displayed Night-Boulevard St. Michel in 1908 in the exhibit “The Work of Six American Artists Residing in Paris,” held at the Art Institute of Chicago and later at the Detroit Museum of Art (now the Detroit Institute of Art) and the Memphis Society of Fine Arts. Also included in this show were other evening scenes by Maurer such as Night – the Quai (location unknown), Night – Place Monge (location unknown), Night Metropolitan (location unknown), and Night – Boulevard St. Michel. Regrettably, none of these paintings have been located, nor is there any visual record of them.

3.5. New York Scenes: 1901-1902

From the fall of 1901 until May 1902 Maurer was on an extended stay in New York. While there, he resided with his parents at 404 West 43rd Street and became reacquainted with the local art scene. Maurer continued to paint figure studies and scenes of everyday life, but his focus turned from Parisian themes to American ones.

During this New York sojourn, Maurer exhibited with Robert Henri, William Glackens, John Sloan and others at the Allan Gallery in New

York.⁷² He painted genre scenes contemporaneous to Henri and Glackens, and shared their interest in the vernacular and in illustrating the everyday realities of urban living. Like Henri and Glackens and their fellow urban Realists, Maurer gravitated toward the places where people communed, including the local beaches.

Maurer was drawn to the lure of seaside recreation and captured life at the beach in a number of paintings, including At the Shore (c. 1901-02, fig. 59), Figures by the Sea (c. 1901-02, fig. 60), Rockaway Beach (c. 1901-02, fig. 61), Rockaway Beach with Pier (c. 1901-02, fig. 62), and Beach Scene (c. 1901-02, fig. 43). Like many of Maurer's other depictions of contemporary life, these vignettes of life at the seashore were painted with an insistence on conveying an immediacy. They were lush, spontaneous works rendered in a broadly conceived sketchy manner.

Maurer was just one of many American artists to explore beach and seaside themes. Alfred T. Bricher, Winslow Homer, Ralph Albert Blakelock, Samuel S. Carr, Edward Henry Potthast, and William Merritt Chase, were among the many Americans prior to Maurer who essayed this subject.⁷³

⁷² See Chapter 4 of this dissertation for specific details regarding this exhibition.

⁷³ See for instance, Winslow Homer, East Hampton Beach, Long Island (1874, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon) and Ralph Albert Blakelock, Rockaway Beach, Long Island, New York (1869-70, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

Seaside recreation was also a topic celebrated by such nineteenth century artists as Eugène Boudin and Claude Monet, both of whom painted fashionable genteel leisure scenes by the water. Edouard Manet created beach vignettes from a more candid perspective. He used broadly mapped out forms and deliberate liquid gestures in pictures that demonstrated a tendency toward simplification. He employed these painting techniques in such extraordinary paintings as On the Beach at Boulogne (1869, fig. 63), an image that offers an obvious point of comparison to Maurer's later Beach Scene (1901-02, fig. 43), which is strikingly similar in character and execution. While Maurer may not have been familiar with this specific painting by Manet in the original, Manet's work in general, quite clearly served an important source of inspiration for Maurer's scenes of everyday leisure.⁷⁴

Among the seaside locales where Maurer appears to have painted was Rockaway Beach, a popular setting that attracted many noted American painters, including Henri who portrayed it in his 1902 painting Far Rockaway (fig. 64).⁷⁵ Other seaside retreats frequented by artists and city

⁷⁴ If this work was painted in 1902, then it is possible that Maurer may have seen Manet's On the Beach at Boulogne when it was reproduced in Théodore Duret's 1902 publication Histoire d'Edouard Manet et de son.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth McCausland suggested that Maurer's beach paintings depicted a beach close to New York, perhaps Far Rockaway. See McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 69. Since McCausland's

dwellers were Coney Island (sometimes referred to as West Brighton), Manhattan Beach, Norton's Point (presently Sea Gate), and Brighton Beach.

Excursions to suburban seaside areas offered not only an escape from the gritty metropolis during the warm months, but also provided Maurer and others with candid subject matter. J. Howe Adams highlighted the need for such retreats in "Bathing at the American Sea-Shore Resorts," an article written for the May 1895 issue of Cosmopolitan:

The hard strain of excitement of American life demands relaxation from time to time: it seems to be almost an especial dispensation of Providence that the American business man is forced by mere force of the thermometer to abandon his occupation and seek health and strength yearly. The ocean is after all of vast importance and utility in our social life as well as a regulator of our physical being. . . it proves a blessing to those in our great eastern cities, to whom it is the only refuge from tenement.⁷⁶

Most beaches were accessible to the city by railroad, boat, and bicycles. By 1894 Coney Island and Rockaway had become popular resort locations; by 1902 Rockaway Beach was teeming with activity. William Dean Howells' contemporary account offers insight into the typical

statement, there has been a general assumption that many of Maurer's beach scenes are Rockaway subjects. There has not been any information to dispute this theory; however, as a note of caution it should be pointed out that there is no conclusive evidence in Maurer's records to indicate that he definitely painted at this particular site. It is likely that the titles given to most of these paintings were assigned posthumously—none appear in the exhibitions records surveyed.

⁷⁶ J. Howe Adams, "Bathing at American Seaside Resorts," Cosmopolitan 19 (May 1895): 327-328. As cited in Giovanna P. Fiorino, "Images of New York City Beaches at the Turn of the Century," p. 12. Seminar paper for William H. Gerds' New York Impressionism class, Fall 1991, The Graduate School and University Center of The City University of New York.

beachgoers experience at Rockaway. "Swarms and heaps of people in all lolling and lying and wallowing shapes strew the beach, and the water is full of slopping and shouting and shrieking human creatures, clinging with bare white arms to the life-lines that run from the shore to the buoys. . . . It is not picturesque, or poetic, or dramatic; it is queer."⁷⁷

Coney Island, which was a watering place noted for its seedy crowds and amusement park, and Rockaway Beach, which was the more tame of the two, were popular beaches represented by numerous turn-of-the-century Realists.⁷⁸ Painters such as Maurer, Henri, and Glackens were drawn to portraying plebian beach subjects at these bathing spots as opposed to focusing on the leisure activities of the genteel as had, for instance, William Merritt Chase. Chase celebrated the rarefied ambiance of Southampton in the Impressionist paintings of the 1890s.⁷⁹ He opened an outdoor painting school in Shinnecock Long Island in 1891 and recorded the comfort and dignities of Long Island leisure in serene landscapes like Idle Hours (1894,

⁷⁷ William Dean Howells, "The Beach at Rockaway," Literature and Life: Studies (New York, 1902), p. 170. As cited in H. Barbara Weinberg, Doreen Bolger, and David Park Curry, "The Country Retreat and the Suburban Resort," in American Impressionism and Realism: The Painting of Modern Life, 1885-1915, p. 119. See pp. 320-324 in the bibliography section of this publication for additional contemporary source material references.

⁷⁸ Before establishing his Realist manner of painting, Henri painted beach and seaside subjects in New Jersey in an Impressionist aesthetic in the 1890s.

⁷⁹ Chase took up residence in Southampton in 1891 and began teaching at the Shinnecock Hills Summer School of Art at that time. The school, which attracted hundreds of students most of whom were women, flourished until 1902.

Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, Texas), At the Seaside (c. 1892, fig. 65), and The Fairy Tale (1892, Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Horowitz, New York). His paintings typically featured decorous figures garbed in stylish seaside gowns and bonnets, shown lounging in tranquil vast open spaces. In contrast to Chase, Maurer and his Realist friends gravitated toward the widely populated beaches and produced paintings that captured the general sense of energy that defined the character of these popular summer haunts. Maurer's Figures By the Sea (c. 1901-02, fig. 60) and Henri's contemporaneous Far Rockaway (1902, fig. 64) are two such examples. Although rendered from different perspectives—Maurer offers a close-up view, painted in an *alla prima* technique, while Henri's scene is shown from afar—both artists relay the scene at hand in a direct manner using similar fresh, fluid brushwork.

In Maurer's more fully realized Beach Scene (c. 1901-02, fig. 43), which is rendered in a less *pochade* like fashion, he shows middleclass New Yorkers on a sunny day enjoying a stretch of sand by the shore. This composition is painted broadly and in a quiet, harmonious palette. It is one of Maurer's most carefully articulated beach scenes. It shows a number of figures presented in tidy, compartmentalized groupings. The sandy beach in the foreground shows two young girls politely sitting across from each other. To their left, Maurer introduces a small girl in a pink and white summer

dress, dark tights, and a white hat; directly adjacent to her is a couple with their backs to the scenic water view. They huddle closely together under a black umbrella that protects them from the sun's rays. Just beyond them, Maurer shows a woman in a white dress sitting on a black beach chair with several nondescript figures rendered in a sort of painter's shorthand nearby. The lack of interaction between these various characters is noteworthy.

Beach Scene stands as a counterpoint to Maurer's At the Shore (fig. 59), a painting with considerably more interaction between the figures portrayed. Rendered from the perspective of a dramatic single focal point, this work has a greater emphasis on narrative than Maurer's other beach pictures. The viewer is brought directly into the heart of the composition and allowed to assume the role of a spectator witnessing and recording an event in progress. The focus of the painting is the beach and the people enjoying it—little boys and girls playing in the sand and a child indulging in a hotdog. In the center of the picture is a group of adults assembled in a circle on a mound of sand. A woman in a white dress, carrying a black umbrella to shield her from the sun, seems to be rushing toward this group to partake in the spectacle of a monkey performing for the crowd. As Franklin Kelly has pointed out, "The darkly clad man with his back to us is the organ grinder; upon close inspection one can make out a strap over his right shoulder and

the single wooden leg supporting the organ. Grinders with their monkeys, many of which were highly skilled pickpockets, were familiar sights not only in poorer neighborhoods of the city, but at the beaches.”⁸⁰

The quick brushwork and fluid paint handling that defines At the Shore is even more prominent in Maurer’s Rockaway Beach (fig. 61) and Rockaway Beach with Pier (fig. 62).⁸¹ These intimately scaled *pochades* measuring 11 x 12 inches were likely executed on site. They were painted with a masterful handling of rapid, slashing brushwork and strong, simplified masses of color and form.

The vitality that characterizes these beach paintings by Maurer is markedly absent from his contemporaneous Evening at the Club (fig. 40), a work that seems to forecast such paintings as John Sloan’s 1912 McSorley’s Bar (fig. 66).⁸² Painted in New York, Evening at the Club depicts a simple game of table shuffleboard and reflects the vogue for this form of entertainment in the United States around the turn of the century.

⁸⁰ See Franklin Kelly’s catalogue entry for the painting At The Shore in Nicolai Cikovsky Jr. et al., American Impressionism and Realism: The Margaret And Raymond Horowitz Collection, p. 104.

⁸¹ While these two works have descriptive titles, it is not clear whether they were assigned by the artist or posthumously titled by someone else, which is often the case.

⁸² See McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 76, and Madormo, fn. 28, p. 33. Both McCausland and Madormo considered Evening at the Club a work executed while Maurer was in New York from 1901-1902. Though Maurer surely painted other similar compositions during his New York sojourn, none have been identified.

(Shuffleboard tournaments were held in hotels, bars, and clubs in New York, and were a particularly popular pastime.)⁸³ The composition shows six men clustered in separate groups apart from one another and engaged in leisurely evening entertainment at an unidentified New York club. The gaslight used to illuminate the room casts shadows on the far wall and sets a distinct tone for the work. A white cat perched in the foreground adds an unexpected and curious note to the painting. The mood is casual—even ordinary—people relaxing with their cronies. The scene is captured without fanfare and lacks a dramatic crescendo. As with many of Maurer's contemporary leisure scenes, the painting's narrative is open ended and subject to viewer interpretation.

Maurer's range as a chronicler of the prosaic is aptly revealed through diverse works such as the quiet Evening at the Club and more ebullient representations such as Le Bal au Moulin Rouge. These and related paintings attest to Maurer's facility as a painter of modern life and highlight his ability to transform everyday moments into paintings that were emblematic of an era.

⁸³ As Nick Madormo noted in "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainment," fn. 28, p. 33, "According to the American Shuffleboard Company in Union City, New Jersey, table shuffleboard was fairly popular in the United States at the turn of the century; tournaments were held regularly in hotels, bars, and the clubs in the New York area."

Chapter 4. Early Exhibitions and Recognition

4.1. Introduction

In an effort to obtain recognition for his talents and to establish his reputation as a professional artist, Maurer actively presented his scenes of contemporary leisure and his figure paintings in European and American exhibitions throughout the formative years of his career. He began showing his figurative imagery as early as 1899, just a little more than a year after arriving in Paris. By 1901 he was publicly exhibiting his scenes of contemporary leisure. These latter paintings earned only occasional mention in the press, while the artist's figurative portrayals elicited the lion's share of commentary and were generally well received by contemporary critics.¹

The full range of both of these bodies of work has eluded scholars over the years in large part due to poor visual documentation of Maurer's early imagery. Furthermore, prior to the information outlined in this chapter, there has never been a detailed account of the specific paintings that Maurer exhibited and thus our understanding of the real depth and breadth of his early work has been limited. In an attempt to provide a more accurate account of Maurer's early productivity, the following discussion surveys the

¹ This may suggest that his figurative work was perceived as superior in quality to the genre paintings, or perhaps simply that it reflected critical preference for such imagery.

artist's exhibition records and reconstructs his exhibition patterns to determine better the type of subjects Maurer executed during this critical period in his development.

A mere fraction of the paintings Maurer exhibited from roughly 1899 to 1905 are visually recorded and the whereabouts of many of these works remains a mystery. Exhibition listings (most of which do not include illustrations of Maurer's submissions) remain the primary repository for information pertaining to Maurer's early production. These documents offer invaluable clues to the type of work Maurer was producing in his earliest years as a professional artist.

As detailed in this chapter, such records reveal that between 1899 and 1907 Maurer was actively submitting paintings to a range of exhibitions. During this time Maurer lived primarily in France, but customarily sent works for exhibition back to the United States, as was typical for many Americans abroad. He also exhibited regularly in European exhibitions. The American exhibitions in which Maurer most often participated were the annual shows sponsored by both the Art Institute of Chicago and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts—two important exhibition forums in which aspiring American artists displayed their work.

4.2. Exhibiting in the United States

Between 1899 and 1907, Maurer presented eleven paintings in annual exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago, showing there from 1899 to 1901; 1903 to 1905; and in 1907. The first year he debuted at the Art Institute, he presented The Fortune Teller (location unknown), which he had also shown across the Atlantic at the Société des Artistes Français, “Salon de 1899 Exposition Annuelle des Beaux-Arts.” In 1900, Maurer displayed The Red Shawl (fig. 32) at the Art Institute, a Whistlerian composition singled out for discussion by a critic for the Chicago Post. The reviewer for this daily newspaper deemed The Red Shawl “one of the most distinguished pictures in the showing” and announced that “it promises for its creator, Alfred Maurer, a brilliant future.”² The newspaper published a sizeable reproduction of this canvas, which today serves as the only visual record of this lost work. It reveals a seated woman in full profile, silhouetted before a painting. In pose and essence, Maurer’s composition is an homage to Whistler’s highly influential Arrangement in Grey and Black No. I: Portrait

² Art Institute of Chicago Scrapbook, August 1900-March 1901, Scrapbook vol. 13, courtesy Chicago Art Institute Library.

of the Painter's Mother (1872, fig. 67), an icon of Western painting from which Maurer and countless others drew inspiration.³

In another review of the Chicago annual of 1900, an anonymous critic declared that the Red Shawl was:

. . . among the best thing shown by Americans. There is a respectable lady inside it, she is there only to make it hang right, and not in the least self-conscious. She sits in profile with the rich old-fashioned Indian shawl wrapped about her. Its pattern has been cleverly suggested without being tiresome, and culminates in a note of subdued vermilion on the shoulder. It is a low-tone picture, of course, and, like Whistler's 'Mother,' but is not an imitation, nor is it vague or artistically slouchy. Every touch is firm, yet refined; and that combination of strength and tenderness which is the greatest thing in the world—after charity.⁴

Frederick Norton writing for Brush and Pencil was less inspired by Mr.

Maurer's figurative endeavor:

The canvas presents a woman in full length seated on a chair and enveloped in the ample folds of a red shawl, which relieves the otherwise somber tones of the painting. Pose and coloring are good, but after all, the picture is not one that will impress a beholder by its strength and beauty.⁵

³ Whistler's impact on painting was pronounced in the 1880s. He was considered by many to be emblematic of a new age of artists. His Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother was exhibited in Philadelphia and in New York as early as 1881 and 1882. This painting spawned a rash of Whistler imitators and was viewed by many as an icon of the times. Edward Dufner's (1872-1957) Le Repose (c. 1901, location unknown) was, for example, a direct response to Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter's Mother.

⁴ Excerpted from Maurer Scrapbook in Elizabeth McCausland Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, microfilm reel D379, frame 873.

⁵ Frederick W. Norton, "The American Artists Exhibition at Chicago," Brush and Pencil 7 (1900): 179.

In 1901, Maurer displayed Girl in White (c. 1901, fig. 24) at the Chicago annual. This lyrical work portrayed a woman dressed in elegant attire of the period. She is shown posed before a closed door, her torso turned sideways, her head angled towards the viewer. Maurer has skillfully balanced attention to detail with an emphasis on the overall abstract qualities of painting. This is reinforced through broad strokes of low-toned color throughout the composition.

Maurer continued to submit work to the Chicago annuals, showing three genre paintings there in 1903: Le Trottin (location unknown), The Last Dance at the Bal Bullier (c.1900-01, fig. 44), and Confection (location unknown). He presented Brushing Up (location unknown), The Rendezvous (c. 1903, fig. 48) and On the Stairway (location unknown) in 1904 and in 1905 showed a figurative study entitled Gabrielle (possibly fig. 16). Woman in Dressing Jacket (location unknown) was Maurer's only entry in the 1907 Chicago annual exhibition.

In addition to regularly submitting paintings to the Art Institute annuals, Maurer also frequently sent works to yearly exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia (PAFA). He presented paintings there from 1900 to 1902; 1904 to 1906; and in 1908 and

1909. After exhibiting The Fortune Teller (location unknown) at the 1899 Art Institute of Chicago annual, Maurer sent this picture to the Pennsylvania Academy exhibition in 1900. The following year he presented a composition listed in the Pennsylvania Academy's catalogue as Portrait: From the Paris Exposition—which appears to be the work currently titled At the Window (1899-1900, fig. 28).⁶ In this same 1901 exhibition, Maurer presented An Arrangement (1901, fig. 31), which became his best-known painting. He also displayed an image titled Café in Paris (location unknown), which marks this as the first documented time Maurer exhibited a Parisian genre scene. The Philadelphia Record took note of Maurer's submissions to the Academy annual, which was described as a “brilliant exhibition . . . An art display which equolt [sic] if not exceed of its kind ever seen in this country.” The critic, who reviewed this exhibition, linked Maurer to Whistler and remarked, “Several small canvases by Alfred H. Maurer, one of which, at least figured at the Paris Exposition, remind one of Mr. Whistler. They are clever little arrangements painted very low in tone, in which the figure is

⁶ Judith Zilczer has identified this painting to be the one that Maurer submitted to the Paris International Exposition. She established this on the basis of no-longer extant exhibition records by Elizabeth McCausland that were affixed to the painting's original frame. See the catalogue checklist in Judith Zilczer, Alfred H. Maurer: The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Collection (Washington, D.C.:Hirshhorn Museum, Smithsonian Institution, 1979).

handled evidently for decorative effect, even in the picture which the artist designates “a portrait.”⁷

Maurer was represented in the 1902 Pennsylvania Academy annual by The White Door (c.1900, fig. 5), Girl in White (c. 1901, fig. 24) The Moth (location unknown), An Arrangement (fig. 31), and Le Bal Bullier (possibly fig. 44). He also showed The White Door (fig. 5), as well as two other unidentified works, in 1902 at the “Twenty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists.”⁸ Charles Caffin, the most outspoken of Maurer’s early critics, offered his opinion of Maurer’s latest efforts in an article for International Studio. He announced that the three pictures Maurer submitted to the Society of American Artists’ Exhibition were very clever; however, he found them clever in a “manual way, and in their evidence of a painter’s eye and beauty.” He criticized Maurer for creating pictures that “amount to nothing technically,” but found exception with The White Door,

⁷ As quoted in review of the PAFA exhibition, The Philadelphia Record, January 13, 1901, section 4, p. 8.

⁸ The critic Charles Caffin chastised Maurer in a review of the Society of American Artists’ exhibition, and noted that three pictures by Alfred H. Maurer were, “very clever in a manual way and in their evidence of a painter’s eye and sense of beauty. But these valuable assets are at the service apparently neither of intelligence nor of heart. The pictures amount to nothing technically, and in this respect with full satisfaction only in the case of one The White Door. Here the technical problem has been worked out so concisely that it affords justification for the picture.” Charles Caffin, “Twenty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Society of American Artists,” International Studio 16 (1902): lxxii-lxxiv.

where “the technical problem has been worked out so concisely that it affords justification for the picture.”⁹

In 1904 Maurer again participated in the Pennsylvania annual, showing a version of Le Bal Bullier (possibly fig. 44) as well as Confection (location unknown), and La Trotline (location unknown).¹⁰ Caffin was not impressed by Maurer’s latest genre studies. In a review for International Studio, he reported that Maurer’s “Bal Bullier and Confection are still student essays in the ways and means of his craft, creditable examples of painter-like vision and practice that are far from being common in these days of average skillfulness.”¹¹

The "One Hundredth Anniversary Exhibition" held at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1905 featured a combination of Maurer’s genre paintings and figurative works. Included were Brushing Up (location unknown), On the Stairway (location unknown), Mademoiselle Jeane (possibly fig. 22), A Garden Near Robinson France (location unknown), and The Rendezvous (fig. 48). The Rendezvous was purchased by William

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Maurer painted more than one version of Le Bal Bullier. The only known version of this subject is located at Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts. See fig. 8.

¹¹ Charles Caffin, “Pennsylvania Academy Exhibition,” International Studio 22 (1904): 85-88.

Merritt Chase.¹² Elizabeth McCausland offered the following description of this painting.

A woman sits in the foreground, waiting for the expected one to come. She is in black with black hat and veil, and her black poodle's head is topped with a bright red ribbon bow. White paneled walls, cream colored ceiling, gray floor, dark red banquette, painted black wooden chairs with straw seats, two seltzer bottles blue with white highlights and silver-colored spigots, all fall within the conventional formula. . .¹³

In 1906 Maurer showed Gabrielle (fig. 16) at the Academy, and at the Cincinnati Museum in the latter's "Thirteenth Annual Exhibition." The Cincinnati exhibition was reviewed by a commentator for the The Collector and Art Critic. An image of Gabrielle was reproduced in this publication and the unidentified critic announced that Maurer was "one of the strongest men of whom the future of American art history will speak."¹⁴ Maurer was undoubtedly encouraged by the attention Gabrielle received in the Cincinnati show and several months later displayed the painting in the Inaugural Exhibition at the John Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis, Indiana.

¹² See the "Illustrated Catalogue of the Valuable Paintings and Water Colors Forming the Personal Collection of William Merritt Chase," No. 159. The Rendezvous was sold at the Chase Estate Sale to Roy Megargel, New York. Nick Madormo, "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer: Paintings of Popular Entertainments," American Art Journal 15, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 33, fn. 36.

¹³ McCausland, A.H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 75.

¹⁴ "Some American Painters," The Collector and Art Critic, November 25, 1906: 23-26.

Although Maurer did not have any works on view at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1907, he exhibited two figure paintings in the 1908 annual, Woman in Dressing Jacket (location unknown) and Une Parisienne (location unknown). He showed The Vrunhard (location unknown) in the Pennsylvania Academy's "One Hundred and Fourth Annual Exhibition" held in 1909.

In addition to regularly sending works to the Pennsylvania Academy and the Art Institute of Chicago, Maurer exhibited elsewhere in 1901 and 1902. He submitted paintings to exhibitions in Buffalo, Cincinnati, and Worcester, Massachusetts in 1901. Also, in 1901 he showed at both the Salmagundi Club and the National Academy of Design, both in New York. Although Maurer was not a member of the New York-based Society of American Artists, he exhibited with this organization in 1901 and 1902.

Maurer had been in New York on an extended visit from Paris from the fall of 1901 until May 1902. During this time his exhibition activity in the United States increased dramatically. In 1901 Maurer showed at the Salmagundi Club, which was originally formed as the New York Sketch Club in 1871. The Salmagundi Club offered art classes and sponsored annual juried art shows. By 1901, its exhibitions were open to both members of the Club and non-members alike, including Maurer. His 1901 watercolor

submission to the Salmagundi Club, which depicted a lady in black silk skirt and white waist sitting at a tea table, earned him the venerated George Inness, Jr. Prize. This success was recalled in 1902 by a reviewer in The Sun:

The winner of the gold medal is Alfred H. Maurer, a young painter who returned from Paris about a year ago and made his first appearance at the Salmagundi Club exhibition, gaining on that occasion the George Inness, Jr. Prize. It will be remembered that the subject of that picture was a lady in black silk skirt and white waist sitting at a tea-table [sic], and the same model reappears in the present one, "An Arrangement"... In fact, this picture recalls the earlier one in the fresh shrouded light, in the sobriety of its cool, clear coloring, in the skillful treatment of textures and the absence of any motive except a very refined and artistic rendering of all these qualities.¹⁵

As previously noted in chapter 2, Maurer also exhibited in 1901 at the Allan Gallery in New York with Robert Henri, William Glackens, John Sloan, Willard Price, Ernest Fuhr, and Van Dearing Perrine. The Allan Gallery exhibition opened April 4th and remained on view for three weeks. It featured work by a small group of artists, several of whom would later go on to become closely associated with Henri and known as The Eight.¹⁶ The men included in the Allan Gallery presentation were diverse artists who did not

¹⁵ "Picture Exhibition at Pittsburgh," The Sun, November 8, 1901, p. 7.

¹⁶ The two artists who later became members of the Eight along with Henri were William Glackens and John Sloan. The group of artists referred to as The Eight were Robert Henri, William Glackens, John Sloan, Everett Shinn, Arthur B. Davies, Maurice Prendergast, George Luks, and Ernest Lawson.

belong to any one particular school. They were united, however, in their commitment to exploring the more progressive tendencies in art not sanctioned by conservative establishments such as the National Academy of Design in New York.

The Allan Gallery presentation featured one well-placed row of pictures with equal hanging space allotted for each exhibitor. It was a blueprint for future exhibition schemes that would be organized by Henri.¹⁷ It was a rare opportunity for Henri and colleagues like Maurer to display their work in a commercial space in an alternative forum to the annual juried shows held in academic settings.

The critic Charles Fitzgerald reviewed the Allan Gallery exhibition for the Evening Sun and was favorably impressed by the intimate size of this show. As Fitzgerald observed "...The attention paid to the larger exhibitions of the year is commonly out of all proportion to their value: as a rule they are little more than repetitious of last year's...it is often to small exhibitions like this that one must look for indications of what the future is likely to

¹⁷ The Allan Gallery exhibition supported progressive art and challenged traditional hanging practices favored by the academies. In contrast to the hanging hierarchy found at academy exhibits, each artist in this show was furnished an equal amount of display space in the gallery, which featured one well-placed row of pictures. According to William Innes Homer, "This 'little exhibition of our own,' as Henri called it, heralded future schemes not only for the equalitarian arrangement of paintings, but also as an early effort to provide exhibition space for more progressive art, thus bypassing the authority of the National Academy." Homer, Robert Henri and his Circle, p. 106.

bring forth”¹⁸ According to Fitzgerald, the pictures on view in this commercial establishment included a dancer by Glackens, as well as Glackens’ scene from Charenton, one of his dance hall pictures, and a park scene. Sloan sent his painting Walnut Street Theater, Philadelphia and according to Fitzgerald he had also submitted “an indifferent portrait of a woman, badly placed on the canvas and with a feebly treated yet aggressive background.” Sloan also had a male portrait on view, which hung in bad light, but which Fitzgerald observed was “strong and well characterized.” Henri, whom Fitzgerald lauded in his review, did not display any portraits but instead showed a number of scenes of contemporary life. He exhibited a night scene with Japanese lanterns, a café scene of a café-chantant, a picture featuring a group of ballet girls, and a village street scene.¹⁹ While Fitzgerald offered praise of Henri’s work, he dismissed Perrine’s efforts. He labeled Perrine’s winter scene, two portraits, and his landscapes as barren. He called Price’s moonlight scene “thin and bodiless,” but found merit in Fuhr’s moonlight picture as well as his study of a stormy sky and swirling water. As for Maurer, Fitzgerald found his submissions (it is unclear how many there were) mostly “agreeable,” however, he noted that they hung in poor light.

¹⁸ Charles Fitzgerald, Evening Sun, April 11, 1901, p. 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

He mentioned only two works by Maurer, a woman in yellow, which he pronounced was “a trifle empty” and a study of a young woman seated with a green-covered book in her hand. The latter of the two, according to Fitzgerald, was “singularly attractive in its well-balanced harmonies of grays and browns.”²⁰

While no catalogue for this exhibition has come to light, a review in Maurer’s personal scrapbook reveals that one of Maurer’s works on display at the gallery was, in fact, the same watercolor that had recently received the George Inness Jr. Prize at the Salmagundi Club in New York in 1901. This picture depicted a lady in black silk skirt and white waist sitting at a tea table. It featured the same model that Maurer had portrayed in his 1901 painting An Arrangement.²¹ A critic discussing this picture on view at the Allan Gallery commented on the influence of Whistler on Maurer. “Mr. Maurer has looked long and earnestly at the work of Mr. Whistler, and gone forthwith back to his studio with the recollection of this master fixed in his mind. As a result he has produced low-toned interiors where in there are

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ A review in Maurer’s personal scrapbook indicates that one of the paintings Maurer submitted to the Allan Gallery exhibit was indeed the same work that was awarded the George Inness, Jr. prize at the Salmagundi Club earlier that year. Maurer scrapbook clipping, McCausland Papers, AAA, D379, frame 871.

figures, sometimes queer in drawing and always loo...[sic] handling.”²² The reviewer also noted that Maurer had a small canvas on view in the concurrent display at the Society of American Artists’ exhibition in New York. The critic David C. Preyer seized the opportunity to reflect upon Maurer’s recent success. He praised Maurer’s painterly technique and dedication to his craft in a ten-page illustrated review in the April 1901 issue of Brush and Pencil:

Then there is Maurer. A young man filled with serious ideals, he seeks expression in a tonal quality of work which is convincing. When he first went to Paris he entered Julian’s, but found after a week or so that no good but much harm would come to him, and he let the schools alone and studied the masters at the Louvre. The result – a wonderful power over his pigment, which he controls with dexterity. When he came home this winter and saw the trend of art here accepted by the miscellaneous buyer, he felt like giving up. ‘There is no hope for me,’ he plaintively laments. But he sends a canvas to the Salmagundi Club exhibition, where out of a hundred and more pictures it receives the George Inness Jr. Prize; he sends three canvases to the Society of American Artists’ exhibition, and while nine hundred out of thirteen hundred canvases are rejected, all three are marked “one” by the jury, and credit – to the hanging committee – all three are hung on the line.

This is not luck! It is the recognition of sterling worth. There is scarcely a man with such power over values, such looseness, such freedom of handling . . . the future has to reckon with this young man.²³

²² Ibid.

²³ David C. Preyer, “The New York Art World,” Brush and Pencil 8 (April 1901): 94.

All of this attention lavished on Maurer paled in comparison to what was to come. Without question, the most monumental event in Maurer's early career was when he won the coveted Carnegie gold medal and first prize of \$1,500 for his brilliant painting An Arrangement (fig. 31) at the 1901 Carnegie International Annual.²⁴ This singular event, more than any other to date, had the greatest impact on Maurer's professional outlook. After he earned considerable recognition at the Carnegie, Maurer experienced something of a meteoric rise in his nascent career. When he returned to Paris in 1902 he was hailed as a great success by his American cohorts. As Elizabeth McCausland observed, it was clear that "Alfred Maurer's stock was rising."²⁵

Maurer again exhibited at the Carnegie International in 1904 with A Garden Near Robinson, France (location unknown) and a figurative painting entitled The Dancer (possibly fig. 27 or fig. 68). He was represented in the 1905 Carnegie International by two paintings, The Errand

²⁴ Edmund Tarbell of Boston who also exhibited at the Carnegie International of 1901 was awarded the third prize of \$500 and the bronze medal for his painting The Venetian Blind.

²⁵ McCausland writes, "The Carnegie Prize launched Maurer on a private thirty years' war. He had won one of the American art world's major awards when he was only thirty-three years old, and after a brief period of study and work." She speculates that if Maurer "had not won academic honors early in his struggle, he might have abandoned his endeavor and gone back to business in Jersey, leaving the world the poorer for his paintings and for the example of his perseverance. Material recognition and critical encouragement were surely factors in his decision to go on with painting. In 1901 Alfred Maurer's stock was rising. Never had there been such agreement among the judges, wrote one critic." McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 67.

Girl (location unknown) and A Parisian (location unknown). He displayed one of his paintings of Gabrielle at the Carnegie in 1909. This was the last of Maurer's early figurative works to be shown at the Carnegie International exhibitions.

4. 3. Exhibiting in Europe

The first year Maurer exhibited as a professional artist in Paris was in 1899. It was then that he showed a figure study at the annual exhibit sponsored by the American Art Association of Paris. Gabriel Paulin, who wrote for the American periodical Brush and Pencil, reviewed this exhibition, which also included work by Lawton Parker, Henry Ossawa Tanner, Augustus B. Koopman, and Edward Simmons. Paulin found Maurer's figure painting (no title indicated) on view to embody a poetic quality lacking in many of the other featured works.²⁶

In 1899 Maurer also showed in the "Exposition Annuelle des Beaux-Arts (117 Exposition)," sponsored by the Société des Artistes Français. He presented the painting La tireuse de cartes (location unknown), which was mentioned by a critic writing a review for the Paris newspaper Le

²⁶ Gabriel Paulin, "Exhibition of the American Art Association of Paris," Brush and Pencil 4, no. 2 (May 1899): 106.

Menestrel. The writer observed “that a certain number of pieces which take creative liberties theatrically, musically or poetically deserve to be put in their own category...” According to this same reviewer, Maurer’s La tireuse de cartes was one such example.²⁷ Maurer had also exhibited La tireuse de cartes (which was shown in American exhibitions as The Fortune Teller) in 1899 at the Art Institute of Chicago and in 1900 at the Pennsylvania Academy.

In 1900 Maurer presented The Dancer (possibly fig. 27 or fig. 68) and Interior (location unknown) at the Galeries Durand-Ruel in France, which hosted the Annual Exhibition of the American Art Association of Paris.²⁸ He also participated in the Paris Universal Exposition of the same year, where he displayed Portrait (At the Window) (fig. 28). Maurer was among the 174 Americans who exhibited in this ambitious fair where American artists collectively showed 256 oils, watercolors, and pastels.²⁹

²⁷ “un certain nombre de fantasies, ingénieuses, theatrals, musicales, ou poétiques méritent d’être classées à part. . . La tireuse de cartes de M. Maurer. . .” Review in Menestrel 28 Mai, clipping in McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 883.

²⁸ The author would like to thank Caroline Durand-Ruel Godfroy, of the Galeries Durand-Ruel in Paris, who searched the Durand-Ruel archival materials and provided this reference. In addition to exhibiting with the American Art Association in Paris at this time, Maurer also showed works with this organization in 1907, 1908, and 1909.

²⁹ Paris 1900: The American School at the Universal Exposition, edited by Diane P. Fischer with essays by Linda Docherty, Robert W. Rydell, Gabriel P. Weisberg and Gail Stavitsky (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1999), xvii. This catalogue was published in conjunction with a traveling exhibition organized by the Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, New Jersey, September 18, 1999 - January 16, 2000.

The American section at the exposition illustrated the considerable progress that American artists had made since the 1889 Paris Exposition, where their contributions were considered little more than derivative of their contemporary French counterparts.

When Maurer showed at the 1900 “Exposition Annuelle des Beaux-Arts (118th Exposition),” at the Place de Breteuil in Paris, he presented La Châle Rouge (The Red Shawl) (fig. 32). The critic Larradin, who wrote for the French newspaper Journal des Débats, declared that La Châle Rouge deserved to be situated in a better place.³⁰ Roger Miter of the Paris newspaper Éclair, also took notice of this painting:

I've saved a few particularly delicate pieces for the end of this section, which, though not necessarily eye-catching, do embody other more precious qualities and reveal a more severe and noble esthetic.

On a grey background, the profile of a seated woman, wrapped in a red shawl, for which the painting is named, stands out; Nothing could be more simple and yet, this is a work of great taste, showing all the emotions of a true colorist.³¹

³⁰ “La Châle Rouge, méritait d’être mieux placé.” See clipping #3 in the Maurer scrapbook in the McCausland papers, AAA, D379, frame 883.

³¹ ...j’ai gardé pour le fin de ce chapitre quelques morceaux d’un spécialement délicat, qui n’ont pas toujours le brillant capable de forcer le regard, mais à qui sont échues s’autres qualités plus précieuses, relevant d’une esthétique plus sévère et plus noble. Sur un fond gris, Mr. Maurer fait se détacher le profile d’une Femme assise, drapée dans un châle rouge; c’est même ce vêtement qui fournit le titre au tableau; rien de plus simple, et cependant, c’est une oeuvre d’une très rare saveur, une oeuvre de coloriste ému.” Roger Miter, Éclair, April 7, 1900, Clipping in McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 881.

During the first years of the twentieth century Maurer actively participated in exhibitions sponsored by the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts (hereafter referred to as the Nationale). The Nationale, which had seceded from the Société des Artistes Français in 1890, held its first salon at the Palais des Beaux-Arts at the champ-de-Mar on May 15, 1889. It received government backing and was recognized in its day for its support of more advanced tendencies in painting and for its openness to international art and artists. The Nationale's exhibitions brought together a vast array of work, which revealed divergent directions in contemporary art. Unlike many other salons, the Nationale did not award medals; it considered membership in and of itself an honor. Participating exhibitors were invited to display as many works as they wished, which were then installed together as a group, rather than separated, as was the case in many other salons.³² The exhibitions at the Nationale often highlighted a range of decorative figure painting, such as that produced by Maurer and other Americans like John White Alexander. In the 1890s, Americans were counted among the most essential foreign

³² Sarah Moore, "John White Alexander (1856-1915): In Search of the Decorative," (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1992), p. 119.

contributors to the Nationale shows and were the most widely discussed in the press.³³

Maurer began showing with the Nationale in 1903 and displayed works in the 1904, 1905, and 1908 exhibitions; he presented no less than sixteen paintings during these years.³⁴ As Nationale exhibition catalogues reveal, Maurer showed five paintings in the 1903 exhibit: La danseuse (possibly fig. 27 or fig. 68), Le Trottin (location unknown), Le paon (possibly fig. 34), La dernière danse au Bullier (fig. 44), and Confection (location unknown).³⁵ In 1904, he showed Le coup de brosse (location unknown), La nuit (location unknown), Le Rendezvous (fig. 48), chez le coiffeur (location unknown), and Dans l'escalier (location unknown).³⁶ According to one critic's appraisal of the 1904 exhibition, the average work on view left something to be desired, with the exception of the Americans who showed a marked advance. The reviewer, who was likely American, commented that "John Singer Sargent, Alfred Maurer, Gari

³³ For an extensive discussion on Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts see Moore, pp. 115-120.

³⁴ Most of the paintings that Maurer showed in the Nationale exhibitions are unlocated today and there is regrettably little visual documentation on them. Nevertheless, extant exhibition catalogue listings do offer an indication of the type of works that Maurer was presenting in the Nationale shows.

³⁵ Le paon, which translates into English as "the peacock," may well be the same painting titled The Peacock that is in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

³⁶ Dans l'escalier may perhaps be the same painting titled On the Stairway, a work which Maurer showed at the Pennsylvania Academy in 1905.

Melchers, and Eugene Ullman show excellent portraits and there are good landscapes by Childe Hassam and Alexander Harrison.”³⁷

Maurer was represented in the 1905 Nationale by two figurative paintings, Gabrielle and Jeanne, and two genre scenes, Au Jardin (c. 1905, fig. 50) and Au Café (c. 1905, fig. 51).³⁸ The last year that he exhibited at the Nationale was 1908 and it was then that Maurer presented Mademoiselle R... (location unknown) and Mademoiselle Renée (location unknown).³⁹ Charles Caffin, who wrote for Burr-McIntosh Monthly praised Maurer’s Mademoiselle Renée, and observed that it “exhales a strangely haunting witchery, a little weird but inevitably alluring.” He furthermore remarked:

Among the figure subjects I must particularly mention Alfred H. Maurer’s Mademoiselle Renée. This American artist has of late been little represented in our exhibitions, but is remembered for the brilliant debut he made some years ago. A pupil of William M. Chase, he showed himself to be an enormously clever painter for the women in black, posed in whitish grey interior. Similarly low-toned schemes of color continued to occupy his attention, but this

³⁷ “Paris Salon Opens: Many American Exhibitors at National Fine Arts Show.” Newspaper clipping in the McCausland papers, AAA. There is no information regarding the source or author of the clipping. However, there is a date of April 14 listed. Maurer exhibited in the 1904 Nationale show, which opened to the public on April 17th. It is therefore likely that this review was written by a critic just prior to the public opening of this 1904 Salon.

³⁸ The genre scenes Au Jardin and Au Café were first acquired by I.A. Morozov, a friend of Leo and Gertrude Stein. These paintings were in the collection of the Museum of Modern Western Art after 1918, and were then relocated in 1948 to the State Hermitage in Leningrad where they have remained since that time.

³⁹ Elizabeth McCausland describes the painting of Mademoiselles Renée as a 2 x 1 meter canvas, “which shows a woman with fan, draped in a fringed dark shawl and posed against an oriental wall hanging.” McCausland, A.H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 85.

present Salon picture marks a new departure. It is a study in several tones of blue, relieved by accents of crimson, involving a certain audacity of colour, that, however, has been thoroughly controlled. It is indeed a very handsome canvas, charmingly painted, both in vigorous treatment of the large masses and in the exquisite fineness with which dainty arabesques of the damask patterns are rendered.”⁴⁰

By 1905, Maurer had begun to show his latest ventures in paint in exhibitions at the Salon d’Automne. He made his debut there when Matisse and his fellow Fauves premiered their radical Fauve work. The salon d’Automne was founded in 1903 by the critic Rambosson, the architect Frantz Jourdain, and a group of progressive painters that included Georges Rouault, Albert Marquet, Edward Vuillard, and Eugène Carrière. Henri Matisse, Henri-Charles Manguin, Pierre Bonnard, Odilon Redon, Auguste Renoir, and Paul Cézanne were among those who ardently supported the Salon d’Automne in its initial years.⁴¹

From the outset, the Salon d’Automne was intended to provide an exhibition venue for both fine and decorative arts. It was presided over by a jury of individuals who were elected to their posts by drawing numbers from society members. Although a rotating jury existed, their purpose was not to

⁴⁰ Charles Caffin, “Painting and Sculpture: The French Salons of 1908,” Burr-McIntosh Monthly 17 (November 1908).

⁴¹ John Rewald, Studies in Post-Impressionism (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1966), p. 263.

filter out the more progressive new work that might be turned away at the other salons, but to ensure that old-school art or “bad” art not be accepted into their exhibitions.

When Maurer first exhibited at the Salon d’Automne in 1905 he presented a version of the Bal Bullier and a composition entitled Au Vestiare (location unknown). While he did not show at the salon in 1906, from 1907 onward he exhibited works in a modern spirit whose subjects were landscapes and still lifes. Although he exhibited primarily in France and in the United States from 1899 to 1914, he also presented works in exhibitions in Munich, London, Venice, Bremen, and Berlin and thus insured further international exposure of his work.

In 1905 Maurer showed Jeanne (c. 1904, fig. 22) in the “Internationale Kunstausstellung” at the Crystal Palace in Munich where he won a gold medal for this extraordinary figure painting. The same year he was awarded the bronze third-class medal for his submission to the “Exposition Universelle des Beaux-Arts” in Belgium. Maurer showed in Bremen in 1906 and again in 1908, when he presented Jeanne.

Maurer exhibited figurative studies and genre paintings in Europe only selectively after 1908. He generally reserved these exhibitions for the more progressive work that he had first begun to paint in the period between

1905 and 1907, when he made the transition from what he called the “old school” to the “new school.”⁴²

While Maurer actively exhibited in a wide range of exhibitions during his early years as a professional artist and received recognition for his achievements, he did not sell his work with any regularity at this time.

Maurer did not support himself solely through the occasional sale of paintings. In general, he relied heavily upon financial assistance from his father. He also earned extra money from commercial projects that he took on from time to time and from the few cash prizes he received from exhibitions such as the 1901 Carnegie Institute annual, in which he was awarded \$1,500 for An Arrangement.⁴³

⁴² Maurer referred to his shift in styles as breaking through from the old school to the new school. The article in which he is quoted as saying this is, “Artist Maurer Now an Impressionist...,” New York Times, April 19, 1908.

⁴³ During Maurer’s years abroad from roughly 1897 to 1914, Maurer’s primary source of financial support came from his father. According to Maurer’s friend Fra Dana, Maurer had been “dependent on his father who, after Maurer became a modernist, supported his son, but did not as in the past, supply him with a studio away from home.” McCausland Papers, AAA, Fra Dana letter, D377, frame 299. Maurer was not independently wealthy nor did he support himself solely through the periodic sales of his paintings. He occasionally produced commercial work on the side for extra money. Also, around 1912 Maurer entered into a business arrangement with the collector Dr. Albert Barnes, and this too provided him with additional income (see chapter 6 of this dissertation for details). In general, there is little information about sales of Maurer’s work during this period. Among the few known paintings he sold are two café scenes acquired by William Merritt Chase and two café scenes acquired by the Russian collector Ivan S. Morozov (more information on this subject is outlined in chapter 3 of this dissertation).

Chapter 5. Transition to Modernism: 1905-1907

5.1. From Old School to New School

Maurer had a decisive turn in artistic direction by about 1905. He seems to have shifted his focus from painting Whistlerian and Chase-inspired figurative compositions, as well as Realist genre scenes, to creating a body of art that reflected a new appreciation for the art of Post-Impressionism.

Between 1905 and 1907, while still working primarily in Paris, Maurer embraced a brighter and more dramatic palette and began to construct his paintings with greater emphasis on the two-dimensional picture surface.¹ As evidenced by typical works from this time, which were landscapes and portrayals of women shown outdoors such as Au Jardin (c. 1906, fig. 69), La Liseuse (n.d., fig. 70), and Woman in a Garden (c. 1907, fig. 71), Maurer had discovered that color could be used to redefine and create new spatial relationships and that line, color, mass, and void could act as conveyors of meaning without being bound to representational subject matter. Moreover, Maurer had come to recognize that these pictorial

¹ Maurer lived mainly in Paris during these years, but made regular excursions to paint and fish in the Champagne region of France. He also traveled to Italy for a brief period during the spring/summer of 1906.

elements in themselves could be used to draw one's attention beyond the concrete appearance of objects to suggest instead ideas and emotions.²

Maurer's engagement with Post-Impressionist painting techniques and methods ultimately prepared him to understand and embrace the tenets of Fauvism around 1907. His development as a modernist followed both a gradual and linear pattern of progression. This reading of Maurer's early stylistic evolution contrasts with Elizabeth McCausland's. McCausland, along with many others, viewed Maurer's transition from traditional work to modernist imagery as abrupt and radical. She was mystified by Maurer's shift in style and could not understand how an artist so perfectly poised for continued success could stop painting accomplished figurative pictures and undergo what she deemed an "aesthetic revolt."³ McCausland failed to see the formal connection between Maurer's earlier painting and his work in the spirit of Post-Impressionism and modernism. She had not recognized that stylistic precedents for Maurer's modernist paintings actually existed in earlier compositions, such as the 1901 Figures by the Sea (fig. 60), where

² For a perceptive examination of the impact of Post-Impressionism on American art see Carol Arnold Nathanson, "The American Response, in 1900-1913, to the French Modern Art Movements After Impressionism (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1973), p.47. See especially chapter 2, pp. 66-109.

³ In her biography on the artist, McCausland cites a letter from Mahonri Young that seems to pinpoint Maurer's conversion to a specific moment in time. She intimates that Young had witnessed a sort of artistic epiphany on Maurer's part, and writes, "Thus Mahonri Young saw the transformation take place under his own eyes." Mahonri Young, as quoted in McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography of America's First Modern Painter (New York: A.A. Wyn, Inc., published for the Walker Art Center, 1951), p. 86.

paint functions in an almost abstract fashion and Le Bal au Moulin Rouge (fig. 45), where passages of bold, unmodulated color presage Maurer's use of color as an expressive tool.

Art historian Sheldon Reich understood more clearly that Maurer's transformation was not nearly as abrupt as McCausland would have it seem.⁴ He viewed Maurer's transition in more gradual terms and found support for this perspective in a 1908 article from the New York Times, in which Maurer discussed his thoughts on the subject. In this piece, Maurer recalled that his earlier shift in style from the "old school" to the "new school" was not easy, but it was nevertheless exciting. He recollected, "when I started to make the change I had to lay my brushes aside for almost a month and think nothing but Impressionism. Then I went at it slowly and timidly, feeling my way." Maurer acknowledged that at the time he was still in transition and unsure of his artistic direction.⁵

The progressive critic Charles Caffin, who, over the years, offered supportive but not uncritical appraisals of Maurer's work, was one of the

⁴ Sheldon Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932 (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973), p. 33. Nick Madormo shares a similar view in "The Early Career of Alfred Maurer," American Art Journal 15 (Winter 1983): p.27, note 45.

⁵ "Artist Maurer Now an Impressionist....," New York Times, April 19, 1908; also quoted in McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, pp. 95–96. The terms Post-Impressionism and Impressionism were often used interchangeably in America at this time. Impressionism was very much a catch-all term used to describe works painted with a luminous palette and broken brushwork.

first to make sense of Maurer's artistic shift. Caffin was one of the few individuals to establish a formal link between Maurer's modernist compositions and his previous work. He viewed Maurer's more progressive imagery as an extension of the artist's earlier interests and stated in 1913 that Maurer's "abstract purpose...seems a natural evolution from the example of Whistler and marks a new and very suggestive note in modern painting."⁶ Caffin perceptively acknowledged that Maurer's change was an organic extension of the artist's long-standing concern with formal issues rather than with mimetic reproduction and other stilted forms of representation. Caffin, like Maurer, regarded both Whistler and Matisse masters of modern painting. He believed that Matisse's simplification and abstraction was forecast in the art of Whistler and that their aesthetics were connected by their mutual quest to express the abstract and to isolate the essence of their given subjects.⁷

⁶ John Loughery. "Charles Caffin and Willard Huntington Wright, Advocates of Modern Art," Arts Magazine 59, no. 5 (January 1985): 105.

⁷ For information pertaining to Caffin see Sandra Lee Underwood, "Charles H. Caffin: A Voice for Modernism 1897-1918." (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1981). As Underwood remarks in "Charles H. Caffin," p. 39, "Both Whistler and Matisse turn away from Realism and from Impressionism to express the abstract, the essence. The means are similar: simplification, concentration, the exploitation of color. Both artists continue to rely on nature as the source for their art, but Whistler and Matisse explore the very limits of representation. Both turn to poetic themes as alternative to the mundane and the materialistic."

The critic Paul Rosenfeld, who declared that Maurer “played the historic role of the first American artist to go Fauve,” remarked in a 1932 article published several months after Maurer’s passing, that the change in this artist’s work was a “somersault”—the act not of an adventurer but of someone who was responding to new art that was “of serious moment and great relevancy....”⁸ Rosenfeld viewed Maurer’s conversion to modernism in the context of the restless state of American art during the early years of the twentieth century, when many artists besotted by new aesthetics began to favor independent vision and to celebrate the supremacy of emotive expression. He understood that Maurer was guided by these impulses and sought to convey “felt” rather than “cognitive” experiences through his art. Maurer had achieved this in large part by shifting from an emphasis on securing beauty of tone to stressing the possibilities of pure color. As author Jerome Mellquist noted in 1942, Maurer “threw over the mantle of gray and put on another of brightest hue.”⁹

Maurer’s cohort Mahonri Young recalled that Maurer had first come to “see” color in a novel way through his exposure to the work of the Impressionist artist Edgar Degas. Young recounted a specific visit that he

⁸ Paul Rosenfeld, “The Maurer ‘Little Girl’,” New Republic 83 (November 30, 1932): 73.

⁹ Jerome Mellquist, The Emergence of an American Art (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1969), p. 177 (originally published, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1942).

had made with Maurer to the Galerie Durand-Ruel in Paris where Maurer admired Degas' pastels. Young recalled:

I had been given permission to visit the Durand-Ruel print house where there was the greatest collection of Impressionist pictures in the world and some of the very finest. Renoir's best were there. Alfie had not seen them. I took him along with me the next day it was open. He was entranced. It was the Degas' that fascinated [sic] him. Not the earlier ones but those miraculous ones he did the last few years of his sight; those wonderful pastels where he became the most wonderful colorist of his time. Alfie who had always worked in tones rather than in color had a revelation. From that day forward his outlook changed. His whole concept became different. He commenced to use bright colors. It wasn't Monet or Renoir that opened his eyes but Degas.¹⁰

While Degas' brilliant use of color left an indelible impression on Maurer, he was also greatly affected by the advanced painting techniques and methods of such pioneering masters of Post-Impressionism as Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cézanne, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Henri Matisse (the last of whom is discussed in detail in Chapter 6).¹¹ Galvanized by the

¹⁰ Mahonri M. Young II Collection, Archival Files. Degas' art was well known in European and American circles at this time. His works had been widely exhibited on both sides of the Atlantic.

¹¹ The term Post-Impressionism arose after the movement had ended in the hands of some of its primary practitioners, including Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Henri Matisse. It has been applied to many artists' work over the years including those associated with the Symbolist movement and Art Nouveau. The critic Roger Fry first coined the term in 1910 and used it in reference to a range of works created after Impressionism. Fry applied this term to his 1910 exhibition "Manet and the Post-Impressionists," and in describing those associated with it noted, "The movement in art represented in this exhibition is widely spread. Although, with the exception of the Dutchman, van Gogh, all the artists exhibited are Frenchman, the school has ceased to be specifically a French one. It has found disciples in Germany, Belgium, Russia, Holland, and Sweden. There are Americans, Englishmen and Scotchmen in Paris who are working along the same lines." As quoted in Judith Zilczer, "The Dissemination of Post-Impressionism in North America: 1905-1918," in The Advent of Modernism: Post-Impressionism and North American Art, 1900-1918 (Atlanta: High Museum of Art, 1986), p. 23. There were many

extraordinary efforts of these diverse artists, Maurer used line, color, and form in an increasingly abstract manner. He further freed his paint handling and allowed his brushwork to dissolve into a language of rapid, rhythmic strokes that took on an independent force as demonstrated by such works as Porte de Ferme (c. 1906-07, fig. 72).

Maurer acquainted himself with the work of the Post-Impressionists through Leo and Gertrude Stein's collection, visits to the Salon d'Automne and Salon des Indépendants, and trips to galleries that showcased Post-Impressionism. Excursions to Durand-Ruel, as well as Ambroise Vollard's gallery as early as 1898, for example, could have provided Maurer with exposure to the work of Cézanne, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, and the Nabis (Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, Félix Vallatton, and Maurice Denis). During such gallery visits, Maurer would also have encountered van Gogh's inspirational pictures, which seem to have been in his thoughts when he painted De Pont Au Campagne (n.d., fig. 73). The fluid, linear brushwork and unbridled vitality of van Gogh's imagery from the 1880s certainly had a lasting influence on Maurer. Vincent van Gogh's monumental contributions to the development of modern art, though not

permutations of Post-Impressionism, but regardless of its particular form, Post-Impressionism on the whole demonstrated a rejection of traditional academic methods and replaced the descriptive function of art with an emphasis on art as an expressive vehicle.

celebrated during his lifetime (1853-90), were indeed acknowledged posthumously. The 1901 van Gogh retrospective at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in Paris, was in fact, a subject of great reflection for many aspiring artists, and it can be safely assumed that Maurer was among those interested individuals who studied the works on view in this display.¹² Bernheim-Jeune was particularly active in showing van Gogh's art and Americans in Paris, including Morgan Russell, Walter Pach, Abraham Walkowitz, Max Weber, and Maurice Sterne were among those who visited this establishment.¹³

Arguably one of the most important artist's to influence Maurer's art during this time was Cézanne. Cézanne's work enjoyed its first real acclaim in France in 1895 after Ambroise Vollard held an exhibition of his pictures in his small shop in Paris.¹⁴ Following this event, Cézanne's art came into wider focus and within the next decade, it would be both hotly debated and adulated by advanced European and American artists.¹⁵

¹² According to John Rewald, this exhibition "not only fired Derain and Vlaminck with unbounded enthusiasm, but in general contributed its decisive share to the emergence of the Fauve movement." John Rewald, Studies in Post-Impressionism (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986), p. 248.

¹³ Bernheim-Jeune held another large van Gogh retrospective in January 1908.

¹⁴ John Rewald, Cézanne and America, Dealers, Collectors, Artists and Critics 1891-1921 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 19.

¹⁵ For an excellent discussion of Cézanne's impact on American artists see Jill Anderson Kyle, "Cézanne and American Painting 1900-1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1995).

Cézanne, a central figure of the modern period, created imagery that shattered traditional spatial conventions in art and brought an end to academicism. He transcended an illusionistic or descriptive space in painting and replaced it with a metaphysical one. He emancipated art from being bound to natural phenomena, established nondenominative space in painting, and thus launched a revolution in modern art. Often using an untuned painting ground, the artist recorded nature in terms of shifting viewpoints, interpenetrating forms and structures, and breathing white passages. Objects and their surrounding spaces freely interpenetrated one another in his compositions; this resulted in a new energized pictorial field. Cézanne's "reconceived" pictorial field provided Maurer with a vitally important model upon which to base his own modernist investigations.

Maurer, Max Weber, Patrick Henry Bruce, Marsden Hartley, Charles Demuth, Stanton MacDonald-Wright, Morgan Russell, and John Marin, were just a few of the many American modernists directly inspired by Cézanne's unorthodox approach to art. Maurer in particular was stimulated by Cézanne's unique treatment of form and the profound new ways in which he restructured the nature of representation. He identified with the tactile or plastic qualities of Cézanne's work. He was struck by the way in which Cézanne artfully negotiated a dialogue between figure and

ground; and between the concrete and the ephemeral. Maurer's fascination with Cézannian pictorial structure ultimately helped him to appreciate the aesthetics of Fauvism, which built upon Cézanne's formal innovations.

Maurer and other Americans in Paris would have had numerous opportunities to acquaint themselves with Cézanne's work in the original, including at the 1904 Salon d'Automne, the artistic event of the year where thirty examples by the artist were on display. The American critic James Huneker, in his review of this exhibit for the New York Sun, captured the complex and challenging character of Cézanne's paintings and offered a critical American perspective on the subject, while he referred to Cezanne as the "god " of the moment.¹⁶ Several of Maurer's American colleagues, including Walter Pach and Max Weber openly expressed and wrote of their

¹⁶ Discussing the work in the room devoted to Cézanne, Huneker noted, the Cézanne *salle* was filled with: Sacred, crude, violent, sincere, ugly, and altogether bizarre canvases. Here was the very hub of the Independents' universe. Here the results of a hard laboring painter, without taste, without the faculty of selection, without vision, culture – one is tempted to add intellect – who with dogged persistence has painted the face of mockery, painted portraits, still life, landscape, flowers, houses, figures, painted everything, painted himself. Cezanne [sic] has dropped out of his scheme harmony, melody, beauty – classic, romantic, symbolic. what you will! – and doggedly represented the ugliness of things. There is a brutal strength, a tang of soil, that is bitter, and also strangely invigorating, after the fake, perfumed boudoir art of so many of his contemporaries... His landscapes are primitive and are suffused by perceptible atmosphere ... Cezanne's [sic] still life attracts by its whole-souled absorption. Chardin interprets still life with realistic beauty; if he had ever painted an onion it would have revealed a certain grace. When Paul Cezanne [sic] paints an onion you smell it. Nevertheless, he has captured the affections of the rebels and just now is their god. And next season it may be some one else. Anonymous [James G. Huneker], "Autumn Salon is Bizarre," New York Sun, Nov. 27, 1904 (article datelined Paris, Nov. 20. As quoted in Rewald, Cézanne and America, p. 96.

appreciation for the art of Cézanne.¹⁷ Weber for instance, recorded the general tenor of enthusiasm American modernists in Paris, like Maurer, had for this profoundly inventive artist. As he noted:

Questful students made pilgrimages to places where Cézanne's work could be studied, and a marked deviation from academic rule and influence was very obvious. A spirit of independence and *recherché* displaced the hackneyed processes and concepts. Cézanne was regarded and revered as the father and liberator, the *Bach* in art to be emulated and worshipped. He was the beacon of light in the stormy years of historic transition and development.¹⁸

Cézanne died in 1906 and within a short time his paintings, which were still considered unorthodox by conservative standards, were widely discussed and included in many contemporary public exhibitions.¹⁹ In 1907 the Bernheim-Jeune gallery featured seventy-nine of his watercolors in a show devoted to this artist and the same year the Salon d'Automne honored the painter from Provence with a retrospective exhibit. The more than fifty oils and watercolors on display provided young painters such as Maurer with an invaluable opportunity to contemplate the truths manifested in Cézanne's

¹⁷ Pach was quite outspoken in his support of Cézanne and in 1908 he published the first serious article in English about Cézanne. See Walter Pach, "Cézanne—An Introduction," in Scribner's Magazine 44 (December 1908): 765-68.

¹⁸ Max Weber, "Matisse Symposium," Max Weber Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 59, frame 152. As quoted in Jill Anderson Kyle, "Cézanne and American Painting 1900-1920," p. 134.

¹⁹ See Jill Anderson Kyle, "Cézanne and American Painting 1900-1920." Appendix A offers an extensive listing of both European and American exhibitions of Cézanne's work.

work. In his reflections upon this monumental event, Maurer's friend Leo Stein remarked, "Hitherto Cézanne had been important only for the few; he was about to become important for everybody. At the Autumn Salon of 1905 people laughed themselves into hysterics before his pictures, in 1906 they were respectful, and in 1907 they were reverent."²⁰

Stein's particular enthusiasm for Cézanne, nurtured by the art historian Bernard Berenson, furnished Maurer and other Americans with keen insight into this artist's work.²¹ After Stein returned from a summer in Italy in 1903, where he spent time with Berenson, he was particularly charged with passion for the art of Cézanne. He shared his newfound appreciation for Cézanne, gleaned from Berenson and Charles Loeser, with Maurer and Mahonri Young and many others. As Young recalled, "B. B's name occurred constantly in their talk."²² Expounding upon Cézanne's work Stein remarked:

²⁰ Leo Stein, Appreciation: Painting, Poetry and Prose (New York: Crown, 1947), p.174.

²¹ Bernard Berenson was an art historian and connoisseur of Renaissance art who originally encouraged Leo Stein's interest in the art of Cézanne. For a more detailed account on Leo Stein's relationship with Berenson see Irene Gordon, "A World Beyond the World: The Discovery of Leo Stein," in Four Americans in Paris (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), pp. 13-33.

²² Norma S. Davis, A Song of Joys: The Biography of Mahonri Mackintosh Young, Sculptor, Painter, Etcher (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University), p. 81. This biography was published in conjunction with the exhibition "Mahonri: A Song of Joys," held in October 1999 at the Museum of Art, Brigham Young University.

Here again is great mind a perfect concentration and great control. Cézanne's essential problem is mass and he has succeeded in rendering mass with a vital intensity that is unparalleled in the history of painting. No matter what his subject is – the figure – landscape – still life – there is always this remorseless intensity this endless unending gripping of the form the unceasing effort to force it to reveal its absolute self-existing quality of mass.²³

Stein's fascination with Cézanne was reflected in the collection that he and Gertrude assembled – a collection that provided fellow Americans access to important paintings by Cézanne. While no complete record of the Cézannes owned by Gertrude and Leo has been uncovered, it appears that over the course of their collecting they had amassed at least 13 oils and watercolors by the “master of Aix.” Included among their Cézannes was a composition of bathers, a portrait of the artist's wife, a view of Mont Sainte-Victoire, and a still life of apples.²⁴

Maurer's own appreciation for both Cézanne and Matisse was fostered by his friendship with Leo Stein, whom he befriended in 1904 and who had a determining influence in bringing about Maurer's conversion to

²³ Leo Stein to Mabel Foote Weeks, undated letter [early 1905?]. See Irene Gordon, Four Americans in Paris (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), p. 26.

²⁴ As Rewald has noted “No complete list of Cézanne's works owned by Leo and Gertrude Stein seems to have ever been established, nor are the dates known when most of them were acquired, but among the oils and watercolors they assembled, this portrait of the artist's wife (V.369) was, in addition to the vertical landscape, the most important Cézanne in their collection . . . There were also two medium-sized compositions of bathers (V.590 and 724), purchased from Vollard one day . . . a small still life of powerfully modeled apples (V. 191), acquired in December 1907 from Bernheim-Jeune; and a study of a man with a pipe (V.566). There were at least seven watercolors, of which one was a smoking peasant . . . four were landscapes, among them a view of Mont Sainte-Victoire . . . Yet there may have been more. . . .” Cézanne in America, p. 56.

modernism, specifically in drawing Maurer to the art of Matisse.²⁵ As Maurer's friend Fra Dana recounted, "I think it was Leo Stein's influence that turned him [Maurer] to this new painting. The Steins bought a lot of this new painting, covered their studio walls with it, and held open house for artists."²⁶

Leo Stein befriended many American artists who visited Paris, including Mahonri Young who Stein first met in 1902 and Maurice Sterne who arrived in Paris in 1904.²⁷ Sterne, Maurer, Stein, and Young spent a great deal of time together during these early Paris days and according to Young, "many were the good dinners the three had at Leo's expense."²⁸ These dinners were undoubtedly colorful outings where the virtues of modern art were discussed and debated. Such subjects were

²⁵ Eliot Clark, one of Maurer's cohorts in France, recalled Leo Stein's "determining influence in introducing him to the work of Matisse." McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 1327.

²⁶ Fra Dana Letter, McCausland Papers, AAA, D377 frame 305.

²⁷ As Young recorded in his reminiscences of Leo Stein, he first met Stein in 1902 at the Académie Julian. The two became fast friends and Leo introduced Young to the work of Degas. According to Young it was also in the spring of 1902 that he met Maurer, "The spring of 1902 I met two men who were to remain friends as long as one of them lived [Maurer] and the other till the present day. A. H. Maurer (Alfie) and Leo Stein. . . Maurice Sterne came over soon afterwards and many were the good dinners the three of [us] had at Leo's expense. Gertrude never joined us at the dinners which were strictly 'stag'. . . . Leo was a real savant. I have only known one or two men in my life as well informed as he, especially in art. He was still unfortunately young, just past 30, very much alive, interested in everything connected with art, discovering new things in the old and the new and loving to talk about his discoveries. . . . I remember his showing me how there was more 'form' in Cezanne [sic] than in Titian or Rembrandt. Unpublished recollections of Leo Stein by Mahonri Young in the Collection of Mahonri M. Young II, Archival Files.

²⁸ Collection Mahonri M. Young II, Archival Files.

surely enhanced by expeditions to local galleries like the Galerie Vollard, an establishment frequented by Stein. Stein also took Maurer and Young with him when he was invited to visit Henri Rouart's collection in Paris. There they would have seen such renowned paintings as Degas' Dancers at the Bar as well as a diverse range of works, including examples by Millet, Eugène Delacroix, Honoré Daumier, and Camille Corot.²⁹

5.2. Maurer and the Steins: Vanguard Circles

Leo Stein was the real center of attraction at the salon that he and his sister Gertrude hosted in their Paris apartment at 27 rue de Fleurus, a magnet for Americans interested in and curious about modernism.³⁰ Maurer was among the first to become a privileged part of this circle. He was a frequent guest at the Stein's home when they were still collecting Japanese

²⁹ As Norma Davis noted in her biography on Mahonri Young, Rouart was then "an elderly man (he was around seventy at the time) who sat with his gouty leg bandaged, and propped up on a chair. He never moved during their visit but shared many interesting experiences with the three younger men. Rouart had a large collection of paintings, including works by Delacroix, Corot, Millet, Degas, and Daumier. His stairwell was lined with wonderful Millet drawings . . . Rouart had been a friend of Degas since school days and he had bought Dancers at the Bar from him for five hundred francs. Mahonri M. Young, "Prince Paul Troubetzkoy," Archives and Manuscript Collection at the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. As cited in Davis, A Song of Joys: The Biography of Mahonri Mackintosh Young, Sculptor, Painter, Etcher, p.69.

³⁰ As the author Mabel Dodge Luhan (who was once briefly married to Maurice Sterne) described, "Leo was always standing up before the canvases, his eyeglasses shining and with an obstinate look on his face that so strongly resembled an old ram. . . . with a fire no one would have suspected in the thoughtful, ramish scholar, he sought in every way to interpret the intention in them. . . . patiently night after night wrestling with the inertia of his guests, expounding, teaching, interpreting...." Mabel Dodge Luhan, Intimate Memories, 2: European Experiences (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1935), pp.321-22. As cited in Four Americans in Paris, pp. 27-28.

prints, before they were devoted collectors of the avant-garde. By 1905, Maurer was, according to Gertrude Stein, “an old habitué of the house...and he was among those who used to light matches to light up a little piece of a Cézanne portrait. Of course you can tell it is a finished picture, he used to explain to the other American painters who came and looked dubiously, you can tell because it has a frame, now who ever heard of anybody framing a picture if the picture isn’t finished.”³¹ Maurer was perhaps the first American artist to see the work of Matisse and that of other advanced modern painters at the Steins. He, in turn, introduced many other Americans to their esteemed collection. When American artists visited Paris, they often solicited Maurer as an intermediary to bring them to Leo and Gertrude’s apartment. Maurer recalled that when Leo and Gertrude were in Florence in 1905, he and Young brought some Americans to see the Steins’ collection and shocked the visitors with the bold artwork on display.

The Steins’ held legendary Saturday evening soirées that were open to artists, writers, dealers, friends, and other individuals who wished to see their magnificent collection, and hear, as well as participate in, lively discussions on art and aesthetics. American artists, including Maurer, Patrick

³¹ Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 10, as quoted in William H. Gerdts, “The American Fauves: 1907–1918,” *The Color of Modernism: The American Fauves* (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries, 1997), p. 23.

Henry Bruce, Arthur Beecher Carles, Stanton Macdonald-Wright, Edward Steichen, and Max Weber were among those in attendance at these influential events. Individuals of other nationalities, such as the Russian collectors Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morosov, were present at the Steins' as well.

The young American art student Max Weber, in Paris from 1905 to 1908, remembered how Leo and Gertrude Stein “graciously received art students, students of philosophy and languages at the Sorbonne, writers, young poets, musicians and Scientists who came to study the painting by Cézanne and other rising artists.” Weber continued,

For hours they stood around a large table in the center of the spacious and well-lighted room, examining portfolios full of drawings by Matisse, Picasso and others, and folios well stocked with superb Japanese prints. This Salon was a sort of international clearing-house of ideas and matters of art for the young and aspiring artists from all over the world. Lengthy and involved discussions on the most recent developments and trends took place.³²

Leo and Gertrude's salon functioned as a sanctuary for modernism, a fertile environment where thought-provoking discussions were common and new aesthetic insights were cultivated. One visitor to the Stein salon

³² “The Reminiscences of Max Weber,” transcript of interviews conducted by Carol Gruber (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1958), p. 74.

remembered that conversation there was “always fruitful of discordant opinions...and that [t]heir studio was a continual battleground.” Fra Dana recalled her experiences with Maurer at the Stein’s home:

We often went to the Steins and we had many discussions about this new movement in painting. They all wanted to get away from the Whistler background and to have more brilliant colors. But it all turned into symbolism. It isn't painting at all. . . Alfred Maurer at least could draw to begin with. And some of these modernists cannot even draw. Alfred might exaggerate his subjects but I could feel that he knew, and nothing could take his beautiful color away from him.³³

Visitors to Leo and Gertrude Stein’s apartment were free to wander among the work of Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Maurice Denis, Pierre Bonnard, Félix Vallotton, as well as that of Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse. The Steins personally associated with many pioneering artists, including Picasso, Matisse, André Derain, Maurice Vlaminck, and Georges Braque. Visitors had opportunities to meet these painters there as well.

Many of the same Americans who attended Leo and Gertrude’s salon were also presented with opportunities to see Matisse’s work in his studio, which was open to visitors on Mondays.³⁴ Select Americans, including Max Weber, Sarah Stein, and Patrick Henry Bruce also attended

³³ McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377, frame 305.

³⁴ Nathanson, “The American Response, in 1900–1913, to the French Modern Art Movements after Impressionism,” p. 136.

the Académie Matisse, which operated from 1908 until 1911.³⁵ There is no evidence that Maurer ever attended Matisse's school. In fact, letters from individuals close to Maurer reveal that while he admired Matisse's work, he never formally studied with this artist.³⁶ This conclusion is further underscored by the fact that it is unlikely that Maurer would have felt compelled to undergo the traditional course of study offered at Matisse's school, when by 1907, he was already creating such advanced vanguard Fauve paintings as Woman with Hat (1907, fig.74).³⁷

³⁵ The Académie Matisse was first situated in the abandoned Couvent des Oiseaux, where Matisse's studio was located and, later, in the Couvent du Sacre Coeur, also in the Montparnasse district of Paris. It was originally small in size and catered to a few students, including Sarah Stein, a young German painter by the name of Hans Purmann, Max Weber, and Patrick Henry Bruce. Later these artists were joined by others, including the American painter Morgan Russell. By autumn 1908, the Matisse school had expanded significantly and was comprised primarily of foreigners (Scandinavians, Germans, Russians, and Americans). Between 1908 and 1911 more than eighty students had attended the Matisse School. For more detailed information on the Académie Matisse, see John Cauman, "Matisse and America" (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 2000), p. 96.

³⁶ Elizabeth McCausland noted in her catalogue of the 1949 Maurer exhibition at the Walker Art Center "that Maurer studied with Matisse is an oft repeated myth. He did not according to Max Weber, who attended Matisse's first art class in the winter of 1907-1908." A.H. Maurer (Minneapolis, Minn.: Walker Art Center; New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1949), p. 11. Furthermore, McCausland's correspondence with numerous individuals who knew Maurer well in those early years confirms this information. Maurer's friend Grace Phillips noted, "Maurer never studied with Matisse but admired him and his work as he gave me a reproduction of one of his paintings." McCausland Papers, AAA, Maurer file, correspondence, Grace Phillips.

³⁷ According to Jack Flam, the program of study at the Académie included drawing and painting from plaster casts and from the model, still life painting and modeling the figure in clay. When Matisse was most involved with the school, he visited every Saturday* to offer criticism. He advised his students to adhere to nature before verging off into abstraction, noting "... You must be able to walk firmly on the ground before you start walking a tightrope." Jack Flam, Matisse: The Man and His Art, 1869-1918 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), p.221. *In a footnote to this text, Flam states that the specific day of the week when Matisse offered criticism is not clearly established. "Alfred Barr (1951, pp. 116-18) says it was Saturday; Marguerite Duthuit (interview, Paris, November 26, 1979) said that her father criticized sculpture on Fridays and painting on Saturdays; Greta Moll (Alfred Barr Papers, Museum of Modern Art Archives) said the criticisms were given on Friday; Max Weber (1951 lecture) said that Matisse gave criticisms on Thursdays." Flam, p. 492-3, fn.7.

While Maurer did not take classes at the Académie Matisse, he surely knew Sarah Stein, one of the key organizers of Matisse's school. Sarah was Leo's sister-in-law and a devoted collector of Matisse's art. She and her husband Michael Stein set up residence in 1903 at 58 rue Madame, on the Left Bank. Like Leo and Gertrude, they too assembled an important modernist collection, although theirs was almost exclusively devoted to work by Matisse and was particularly rich in holdings of his Fauve paintings. Their treasured works of art were accessible to visitors during regular Saturday evening open houses held at their apartment, which were attended by a wide range of visitors, including Matisse. Though there is no specific record of Maurer having visited Sarah and Michael Stein's salon, he likely passed through on occasion to see Matisse's work and to socialize with other American colleagues that frequented there.

While it can be safely presumed that Maurer had at least some dealings with all of the Steins, there is little question that Maurer's most intense contact with the Stein coterie was with Leo.³⁸ Maurer and Leo appear to have enjoyed a somewhat symbiotic relationship. They shared a passion for matters pertaining to art. Leo was a connoisseur, influential theoretician, and supporter of vanguard aesthetics. Although Maurer was not

³⁸ Maurer and Leo seem to have maintained a friendship at least into the teens and perhaps beyond then.

an avowed intellectual, he would have valued Leo's insight into intellectual matters. Leo was also a frustrated, aspiring painter who perhaps sought artistic guidance from a more seasoned artist such as Maurer. While Leo may have gleaned insight into his work from his American colleague, Maurer's interest in progressive art and ideas was quite clearly fostered by Leo. Leo's familiarity with many of the advanced artists of the day expanded Maurer's artistic horizons.

When Leo discovered Matisse and jointly, with Gertrude, Michael, and Sarah, purchased his La femme au chapeau (The Woman with the Hat) (fig. 75) from the 1905 Salon d'Automne, Maurer took careful notice as he stood at a crossroads in his own career. Years later, when he discussed this event with his dear friend Arthur Dove, Maurer said that he was "mad as hell" when the Steins first bought La femme au chapeau, because this new style of painting was outlandish to him.³⁹ Despite the fact that this work seemed outlandish to Maurer at that moment in time, the art of Matisse and Fauvism would soon become pivotal to his development as a modernist.

³⁹ Arthur and Helen Torr Dove Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 4682, frame 377.

Chapter 6. Maurer and the Fauve Aesthetic: 1907 - 1914

6.1. Introduction

Between 1905 and 1907, Maurer successfully made the transition from an artist searching for new means of expression to one fully invested in a dialogue with Fauvism. After successfully navigating his way through painting techniques and styles associated with Post-Impressionism, Maurer solidified his commitment to creating works in a Fauve aesthetic. He began painting Fauve pictures around 1907 and shortly thereafter emerged as Fauvism's best-known American exponent as well as one of its most skilled practitioners. Before the end of the decade, Maurer would secure his position in history as a pioneering first generation American modernist dedicated to carrying on the legacy of Fauvism.

Maurer's early and sustained championing of Fauvism contributed to the cross-fertilization of this aesthetic between France and America in the first years of the twentieth century. During this critical period in the nascent stages of American modernism, Maurer worked within the cultural milieu that fostered artistic developments by Matisse and those artists who allied themselves to him. He was thoroughly engaged in a dialogue with Fauvism when certain stylistic innovations by Matisse and his colleagues were still

being cultivated and refined. Maurer created an impressive body of work that was in concert with the Fauve agenda, and he produced many paintings that demonstrated a kinship with Matisse's post-Fauve period of experimentation from 1908-14, when Matisse continued to build upon the lessons of Fauvism. Maurer proved to be more than a transient American simply responding to Fauve-related work on view at Parisian salons and galleries. As illustrated by such paintings as Woman with a Hat (1907, fig. 74) and Fauve Still Life (c. 1909-12, fig. 76), he had a superior command of Fauve form, color, and space, and demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the guiding principles, methods, and techniques that governed Fauve developments. Maurer's paintings were invested with the vigorous experimentation that underscored Fauve art and stand as direct expressions of the period in which they were executed.

While important examples of Maurer's Fauve imagery have surfaced in recent years, much of this work has yet to be unearthed because many of the artist's Fauve paintings were left behind in France when he fled Europe for the United States in 1914 at the onset of World War I.¹ Maurer did not return to Paris and consequently never retrieved the paintings left

¹ Although Fauve elements factored strongly into Maurer's art after he left France in 1914, it was from 1907 to 1914 that Maurer seems to have most closely adhered to the tenets of Fauvism. Once he was back in the United States, Maurer continued to draw upon the lessons of Fauvism, but his palette and paint handling took on a different character over time.

behind at the time of his sudden departure. These compositions, whose numbers have been estimated to be somewhere from several hundred into the thousands, were presumably dispersed piecemeal over time.² Several examples were discovered by the artist Pierre Daura at a Paris flea market in 1925.³ Over the course of roughly three decades, Charles Sterling, a former curator at the Louvre and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, also found and acquired a number of Maurers. He discovered them in French junk shops, book stalls, antiques stores, flea markets, and at public sales at the Hôtel Drouet in Paris.⁴ Sometime prior to 1973, Sterling sold his Maurers to a private collector, who in turn, sold them to the New York dealer Bernard Danenberg.⁵

² Elizabeth McCausland has estimated that Maurer left behind several hundred paintings while Sheldon Reich has suggested that there may have been as many as three thousand. The fact remains that there is simply no definitive account of what Maurer actually left in France. See for instance, Sheldon Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973), p.39.

³ According to Pierre Daura: “The place where I last saw the Maurers was, if I am not mistaken, Avenue Ruben-Porte Clignacourt, at a dealer in a little kind of barraque, at the entrance to what used to be called ‘le marché au puces’ . . . It was about 1925. The dealer had hundreds of them. I was able to buy only three of them (what was left when I went back with cash).” See Pierre Daura letter to Elizabeth McCausland dated June 25, 1949, Elizabeth McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377, frame 280-81. Two of the Maurer’s that Daura purchased were the early figurative works The Town Crier (fig. 7), (c. 1900, Private Collection, Washington, D.C.) and The Midinette (fig. 20), (c. 1900, Private Collection, Washington, D.C.). For additional information about these paintings, consult Chapter 2, fn. 17 of this dissertation.

⁴ Alfred Maurer and the Fauves: The Lost Years Rediscovered, Essay by Peter Pollock. (New York: Bernard Daneneberg Galleries, 1973), n.p.

⁵ In his catalogue essay for this show, Peter Pollock claimed that Danenberg had “negotiated the purchase of this spectacular group of pictures from a highly qualified French critic and curator,” implying that Danenberg had purchased the Maurers directly from this source, who although unnamed, was Charles Sterling. According to Pollock, “This connoisseur (who wishes to remain anonymous) sought out Maurer’s works. In a review of Danenberg’s exhibition, the critic Hilton Kramer raised questions about the source of

In February 1973 Danenberg presented a group of these paintings in the exhibition “Alfred Maurer and the Fauves: The Lost Years Rediscovered.” Although not all of the forty-five “newly discovered” paintings on view were strictly Fauve in nature—many were Impressionist and Post-Impressionist, with no distinctions drawn between these stylistic categories—this exhibition nevertheless represented the first concentrated attempt to assemble and present a group of Maurer’s Fauve imagery. Danenberg’s catalogue, written by Peter Pollock, provided an initial exploration of a cross-section of this work, but it was by no means a definitive scholarly assessment.

The present study therefore sets forth the most accurate and comprehensive account of this vitally important portion of Maurer’s oeuvre. It seeks to side step the distinct lack of primary source material that obscured information about the artist’s Fauve years, by exploring Maurer in relation to

many of the Maurers featured in the show. In response to Kramer’s review, Danenberg wrote a lengthy letter to Kramer on March 26, 1973, stating that he had acquired the Maurers directly from Charles Sterling, whom he called “one of the foremost authorities on art.” Danenberg neglected to mention, however, that not all of the paintings in the exhibit had come from Sterling’s collection. According to Danenberg, “Prof. Sterling’s sole reason for requesting that we do not use his name... was his concern that the Comité des Beaux-Arts in Paris would prohibit the export of several of the most important of the group and acquire them for the Musée d’Art Moderne, Paris, as is their prerogative.” A letter from Sterling to Danenberg recently presented to the author, courtesy of Martin Diamond, reveals however, that, contrary to what Danenberg told Kramer, he did not purchase the Maurers directly from Sterling. Instead, he bought them from a private collector who acquired them from Sterling. Hilton Kramer, “Maurer: Lost and Found,” *New York Times*, March 23, 1973, and March 26, 1973. The letter, consulted in addition to Kramer’s review, was from Bernard Danenberg to Hilton Kramer, March 26, 1973. While preparing her 1951 biography on Maurer, Elizabeth McCausland visited Paris expressly to view Sterling’s Maurer collection. Letter from Charles Sterling to Bernard Danenberg, March 29, 1973. See Bernard Danenberg, “Those ‘Lost’ Maurers,” *The New York Times*, April 8, 1973, p. 25.

Fauvism as both a concept and aesthetic. It casts Maurer within the general context of Fauve developments, before it offers to a more detailed discussion of his Fauve work.⁶

6.2. Maurer and Fauvism

During the first decade of the twentieth century, most artists living in America believed that Fauvism was synonymous with the art of Matisse, generally to the exclusion of other practitioners of this aesthetic.⁷ Maurer on the other hand was living and working in Paris during Fauvism's heyday (between roughly 1905 and 1908) and recognized that Fauvism as a phenomenon, though spearheaded by Matisse, extended beyond the parameters of his work and was instead the product of a number of talented

⁶ A comprehensive understanding of Maurer's Fauve work is complicated by the fact that few of the artist's paintings are dated or can be assigned dates on the basis of primary documentation. Scant primary documentation about Maurer's Fauve years also makes it difficult to firmly link his work to specific intellectual sources. Maurer rarely openly discussed or wrote about such matters. Letters, notes and reminiscences of those who associated with him at the time provide only small clues to the ideas that shaped his Fauve work. It is clear, however, that he was generally informed of contemporary theories on art and aesthetics. Spirited debates about such issues were commonplace at local cafés and at the Stein Salon as well. Moreover, Leo Stein, as previously noted, was deeply interested in these topics and often expounded upon them with his circle of friends, which included Maurer. The most direct evidence, however, of Maurer's interests at the time is revealed by the artist's work itself. This imagery transcends synthetic stylization and reflects an understanding of contemporary developments in art and aesthetics.

⁷ Ironically, by the time that most of these Americans developed a serious interest in Fauvism, Matisse had already moved beyond his defining Fauve period and was developing an art that focused more specifically on decorative issues in painting. For information on this subject, see William H. Gerds, "The American Fauves: 1907–1918," *The Color of Modernism: The American Fauves* (New York: Hollis Taggart Galleries, 1997), p. 7.

and innovative modernists. It was well known to Maurer that Fauvism was a multidimensional art that came in many shapes and forms; this perspective was undoubtedly reinforced through the many opportunities Maurer had to view diverse manifestations of this art.

Beyond the large public exhibitions that provided access to the work of the Fauves, as previously noted, Maurer had first hand exposure to examples of Fauvism through the Stein salons, where he met many artists of the day including Picasso, and likely Matisse as well.⁸ While the exact nature of Maurer's contact with Matisse and his Fauve colleagues is unclear, his initial familiarity with Fauvism, the first major modern art "movement" of the twentieth century, can be traced back to the 1905 Salon d'Automne in Paris where Fauvism debuted and where Maurer himself exhibited two paintings. Although it proved to be a relatively short-lived phenomenon, Fauvism swept through the art world with tremendous force and altered the consciousness of countless modern artists, including Maurer, before it dissolved sometime between 1907 and 1908.⁹ Though today the term

⁸ According to James Mellow, Maurer knew Picasso. "It was 'Alfy' who in Gertrude Stein's account of a mishap at a dinner with Picasso and Fernande Olivier, paid compliments to Fernande until she was calm and placid." See, James R. Mellow, "The Maurer Enigma," *Arts Magazine* 34 (January 1960): 32.

⁹ Art historians differ regarding the date when Fauvism ended. John Elderfield, for example, posits that Fauvism ended when Matisse and Derain went their separate ways in 1907. John Elderfield, *The Wild Beasts, Fauvism and its Affinities* (New York; Toronto: The Museum of Modern Art, distributed by Oxford University Press, 1976) p. 13. John Rewald, on the other hand, designates 1908 as a termination date for Fauvism, noting that it dissolved three years after it had been born at the 1905 Salon. John Rewald, *Studies*

Fauvism is inextricably linked to a specific type of art, it should be noted that during Maurer's engagement with this aesthetic the term Fauvism was more of a social designation rather than a stylistic tag.

Neither a consciously organized school nor an autonomous movement, "Fauvism" came to characterize the body of imagery produced by a loose network of artists who were collectively known as *les fauves*. *Les fauves*, which, loosely translated, means "wild beasts," was the less-than-favorable name applied by the French art critic Louis Vauxcelles to paintings by Matisse and his colleagues like André Derain and Maurice Vlaminck that were on view at the Société du Salon d'Automne in 1905 at the Grand Palais in Paris. Appalled by their unruly art, Vauxcelles likened these men to untamed animals, and decreed their colorful work crude and barbaric.¹⁰ The artists that Vauxcelles derisively labeled *les fauves* were

in Post-Impressionism (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986) p.270. Gaston Diehl designates 1908 as the date when the "Fauve heresy seems to have subsided, with many of its adherents choosing to compromise or give up the struggle." Gaston Diehl, The Fauves: The Movement, the Masters, the Precursors and their Followers (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1975) p. 12.

¹⁰ Noting the contrast between a traditional marble sculpture located in the same gallery and a "wild" painting by the artist Albert Marquet, Vauxcelles proclaimed "Ah—Donatello au milieu des fauves," (Donatello, amid the wild beasts)—thus giving birth to the wry epithet *les fauves*. The following day, October 17, Vauxcelles used the term *les fauves* in print for the first time in an October 1905 review for the French daily Gil Blas, but it would not be until 1907, that the term "Fauve" would come into common usage in reference to a specific school or style. Once it was widely used, it was often applied inconsistently and inaccurately by contemporary American critics, including Arthur Hoeber, Charles Caffin, and Gelett Burgess. Hoeber, Caffin, and Burgess were among the first American critics to use the term Fauvism in print between 1908 and 1910. However, they often applied it to artists outside the Fauve scope, reflecting the fluid and inexact use of such terms.

criticized at Fauvism's onset for creating what Maurer himself initially perceived in 1905 as "outlandish" work.¹¹ Their imagery was generally reproached for being child-like and condemned for its arbitrary use of pure pigment and overt reliance on expressive distortions. The Fauves' approach to depicting space, color, and form alarmed and outraged the public who could not or would not, see the fruits of their labor as more than violent, freakish displays.¹²

Although the work of the Fauves was connected stylistically, the artists committed to this aesthetic were fiercely independent and individualistic, two qualities that aptly describe Maurer. They were briefly linked by similar artistic views and goals, and banded together for a short while to paint and exhibit in the company of one another. While many artists of varying internationalities investigated the possibilities of Fauvism, there

¹¹ As previously noted in Chapter 5 of this study, Maurer did not initially accept Fauvism as a viable form of expression. Arthur Dove recalled, Maurer was "mad as hell" when the Steins bought Matisse's La Femme au Chapeau, because this new style of painting was outlandish to him. Arthur and Helen Torr Dove Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel 4682, frame 377.

¹² Particularly at Fauvism's onset, Fauve efforts were labeled the product of outrage and rebellion. Few were able to acknowledge the sincere commitment these artists had made to revising the nature of pictorial construction. Among the many skeptics were French critics like Marcel Nicolle who wrote the following commentary for Le Journal de Rouen: All attempts at description, judgment or criticism are defeated. What we see—apart from the materials used—has nothing to do with painting. Formless streaks of blue, red, yellow and green, all mixed up, splashes of raw colour juxtaposed without rhyme or reason, the naïf and brutal efforts of a child playing with its paint-box. We can do little more than record the names of these phenomena, whose art, by our standards, at least, is either raving madness or a bad joke. November 20, 1905, Le Journal de Rouen. As quoted in Jean-Paul Crespelle, The Fauves (Greenwich: New York Graphic Society, 1962) p. 14.

were three core groups of artists, each of whom orbited around Henri Matisse, that were generally credited as having best exemplified the spirit of Fauvism. The first of these three, the principal Fauves, were Matisse, André Derain and Maurice Vlaminck—commonly referred to as the “School of Chatou.” A second Fauve cluster included Matisse, Albert Marquet, Henri-Charles Manguin, Charles Camoin, and Jean Puy, with Georges Rouault as a satellite artist of this ensemble. A third association was formed by Matisse, Emile-Othon Friesz, Raoul Dufy, and Georges Braque. These artists were known as the “Le Havre group.”

Unlike Maurer who explored Fauve pictorial strategies for many years, these various painters had only brief Fauve periods in their careers, though during this time they executed distinctive bodies of art that today provide a sort of travelogue of Fauvism. They are the individuals most often singled out for their contributions to Fauve developments and widely recognized as having shaped the course of Fauvism in France. All of these artists produced works distinct in character; none followed a singularly defined path or adhered to a specific painting formula in an attempt to achieve a unified Fauve art.¹³ As would have been well known to Maurer,

¹³ Braque, for instance, demonstrated a penchant for solid forms and painted in a calm, structured manner, while Rouault’s work often projected a strong, dissonant, brooding aura. Puy, Manguin, Valtat, and Camoin were less adventurous than the others, and remained more connected to Cézanne. See Rewald, *Studies in Post-Impressionism*, p. 268.

the differences that separated the work of the Fauves were just as important as the commonalities that bound them.¹⁴

The artists in Matisse's immediate circle had professional and social contact with one another, and reacted to each other's imagery in a way that yielded an invaluable ebb and flow of ideas. This ultimately fueled the progress of Fauve developments. Initially, many of the artists split off into clusters and painted and traveled together. Matisse was included in these groups but often worked independently, as did many of the other Fauves later in their careers. Maurer too seems to have worked primarily alone during his Fauve years in Paris. He did, however, maintain contact with other Americans working in the spirit of Fauvism, including Arthur Dove and Arthur B. Carles, the latter of whom lived briefly in the same studio building as Maurer at 9 rue Falguière in 1907.¹⁵

Just as Maurer's own work changed stylistically during his engagement with Fauvism from 1907 until approximately 1914, Fauve

¹⁴ Judi Freeman discusses the importance of these differences between the Fauve artists in her essay in The Fauve Landscape (New York: Abbeville Press, 1990), p. 15. See also Ellen Charlotte Oppler, Fauvism Reexamined (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1976), p. 83.

¹⁵ Barbara Wolanin notes in her 1981 dissertation on Arthur B. Carles, that the address 9 rue Falguière was listed on a 1907 letter from Carles. Henry H. Gardiner was the first to suggest that Carles perhaps shared a studio with Maurer at this address. Carles apparently stayed at a number of Paris locations when he went to Paris in 1907 on a Cresson Traveling Scholarship courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Barbara Ann Boese Wolanin "Arthur B. Carles, 1882-1952: Philadelphia Modernist," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1981), p. 37.

imagery by Matisse and his circle also underwent meaningful shifts during Fauvism's halcyon days. These changes often took place from year to year. For instance, around 1905 Matisse and his cohorts painted under the inspiration of Seurat as well as van Gogh. Many of these artists utilized a broken-touch and mixed technique style during this time. From 1906 to 1907 Gauguin's flat-color Fauvism proved to be extremely influential, and the more adventurous Fauves responded increasingly to the decorative work of the Nabis.¹⁶

Matisse and the Fauves as well as artists like Maurer and fellow Americans including Stanton Macdonald-Wright and Morgan Russell, among others, found stimulus for their vanguard work in color theories postulated by Michel-Eugène Chevreul.¹⁷ Chevreul's theories ultimately freed these artists to use color in vital new ways to communicate subjective experience. Chevreul had discovered that select colors situated adjacent to each other generated a reciprocal interaction that influenced the way people perceived color. This discovery allowed artists like Maurer to use color in

¹⁶ Elderfield, The Wild Beasts, Fauvism and its Affinities, p. 117.

¹⁷ This was not the only instance in which Maurer subscribed to contemporary aesthetic theory. He also strongly advocated the use of Jay Hambidge's Theory of Dynamic Symmetry, though he cautioned that one should never be a slave to art theory. Maurer kept copies of Hambidge's lesson sheets, which were issued in the 1920s. Copies of these sheets are with Maurer's archival materials. See the McCausland Papers, AAA, D379, frames 1351-1404.

completely self-referential ways and thus underscored the subjective nature of their painting.

Presenting the natural world from a subjective point of view was central to Maurer and all artists who worked in a Fauve idiom. These painters rejected literal, descriptive representations of nature and reformulated traditional concepts of space, color, and form. Using an economy of means, Maurer and others painting Fauve pictures, captured the very essence of their subjects through a new figurative system that enabled them to achieve a unique dialogue between observation and representation. They sought to relay the sensation an object aroused in them and painted nature filtered through their emotional response to it. As art historian Marcel Giry perceptively noted, “What mattered most to the Fauve painter was expressing that invitation to dream contained in every scene of nature, to convey the feelings of things, his relationship with them, or their relationship with each other.”¹⁸

Many Fauve artists also found stimulus for their investigations in the work of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), a key figure who may have indirectly influenced Maurer’s own painting at the

¹⁸ This was published in English in 1898. Marcel Giry, Fauvism: Origins and Development (New York: Alpine Fine Arts Collection Ltd., 1981) p. 249.

time. Nietzsche's 1883-85 publication Thus Spake Zarathustra was indeed a subject of great discussion very much in the air when Maurer was working in Paris.¹⁹ In addition to Nietzsche's general influence on modernist developments, Stéphane Mallarmé's (1842-1898) Symbolist writings also made an impact on many Fauve artists. His inventive poetry, with its complex layering of language and idiosyncratic syntax, "suggested" rather than "named" properties, and presented a new structural model for Maurer and others who were searching for alternate means in which to express themselves.

Fauve imagery by Maurer as well as the principal Fauves must likewise be considered in relation to dramatic new understandings of space and time, as pioneered by such figures as Albert Einstein (1879-1955), who first posited his groundbreaking theory of relativity in 1905. Einstein's theories as well as those of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) were considered part of popular discourse and contributed to the philosophical underpinnings of Maurer's Fauve paintings. Bergson's emphasis on intuition and on the concept of *élan vital* (vital impetus), as expressed in his 1907 publication

¹⁹ Nietzsche's ideas enjoyed a rather cult-like following during this period. They became a focal point of interest for many of the Fauves. For instance, Derain quoted Nietzsche in letters that he wrote to Vlaminck as early as 1900. As Marcel Giry notes, "It is obvious that around 1900, young people—not only writers but also painters—could not fail to be attracted by the ideas of Nietzsche, who proposed a new code of conduct and stimulated their search for a fresh artistic approach." Giry, Fauvism: Origins and Development, p. 15.

Creative Evolution, would have provided fodder for Maurer's modernist investigations as revealed by such works as Fauve Landscape (c. 1908-10, fig. 77), which illustrate the artist's early and lucid grasp of such ideas.

Creative Evolution was Bergson's third major publication and was something of a bible for many progressive artists. It was widely read and often quoted. Back in America, this philosopher's writings were especially popular among the artists of the Stieglitz circle, with whom Maurer formed an association beginning in 1909. Excerpts from Bergson's publication were later reprinted in Stieglitz's 1911 issue of Camera Work and thus reinforced and expanded the currency of Bergsonian doctrine within American circles.

Beyond these literary, scientific, and philosophical sources, the artists applying the tenets of Fauvism in their work were profoundly influenced by photography, Japanese art, and the arts of Africa and Oceania.²⁰ Exotic and tribal forms, for instance, provided Maurer with important archetypes that were direct, simple, immediate, and universal. These exemplars offered new alternatives to notions of beauty that had long dominated Western thought. African art, once considered inaccessible to Western sensibility, had come to

²⁰ Two excellent sources addressing the influence of primitivism on modern art are: Robert Goldwater, Primitivism in Modern Art (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1967 ed.), first published in 1938; Primitivism in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and Modern, edited by William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984). See in particular the essay by Jack Flam "Matisse and the Fauves," pp. 211-240.

be extremely appealing to innovative artists searching to divest their work of references to narrative and to the material world. Contemporary reassessment of African art forms galvanized artists to reconsider ways of negotiating the ideal and the real, the conceptual and perceptual.²¹

Primitive and children's art, like African art, emphasized the plastic qualities of form over anatomical accuracy and served as compelling models for those artists working in a Fauve vein. Both existed free from the pre-established doctrines and conventions that typically made art a self-conscious act and allowed for a focus on the product of the unconscious. These artistic precedents presented Maurer with a form of reality unhampered by rationalization and education. Primitive art, in particular, then first being prized for its artistic properties rather than viewed simply as curiosities of ethnographic interest, provided a superb model of how form could function once it was removed from the traditional parameters of space and gravity. It equipped Maurer with a new plastic language that privileged an expressiveness.

The artists committed to a Fauve aesthetic were greatly inspired by all of these diverse artistic and cultural resources. They drew actively upon them when creating their works and responded to the very notion of what it

²¹ Flam, "Matisse and the Fauves," in Primitivism in 20th Century Art, p. 212.

meant to be modern. They understood the need to find inventive ways in which to express themselves in the context of their ever-changing modern age.

6.3. Maurer's Fauve Work

The striking Fauve work that Maurer produced in the first decade of the twentieth century aptly reflected art's ever-evolving relationship to the modern world. These paintings positioned him at the helm of American modern art developments and offered influential models to other American modernists. They were often compared with Matisse's work and directly reflected what the American painter Marsden Hartley referred to as the "Matisse color principle."²²

Maurer's Fauve imagery, which is noted for its predominant use of pure jewel-like, expressive colors, most closely corresponds with Matisse's palette of his Fauve period from approximately 1905 to 1908 and the related paintings he produced through the mid-teens. It is best understood when

²² In 1912 Marsden Hartley proclaimed to Alfred Stieglitz that he did not "know of anyone else who is attempting to carry on the Matisse color principle." He observed that "maybe he [Maurer] would turn out to be it. At all events he is an artist and God knows that is something." See letter from Marsden Hartley to Alfred Stieglitz, n.d., (early November 1912), Stieglitz Collection, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beineke Library, Yale University. I am grateful to Bruce Weber of Berry-Hill Galleries for bringing this document to my attention.

divided into three main categories: figurative works, still lifes, and landscapes. Most of the artist's Fauve paintings convey little detailed information about the subjects depicted. With the exception of numerous pictures featured in Maurer's 1913 one-man exhibition at the Folsom Gallery in New York, the artist rarely gave his modernist paintings revealing descriptive titles.²³

6.4. Figurative Imagery

Maurer challenged the boundaries of traditional representation and recast the art of figure painting in startlingly new modernist terms in the Fauve figures he executed in the first decade of the twentieth century. Other American modernists, including Arthur B. Carles, Walt Kuhn, Abraham Walkowitz, Jerome Blum, Henry Lyman Sayen, and Morton Livingston Schamberg experimented with Fauve portrayals as well. However, Maurer composed some of the most provocative Fauve figure paintings of any

²³ Maurer's paintings in his 1913 exhibition at the Folsom Gallery in New York were titled as follows: Tulips, Dahlias, The Begonia, The Agate Pitcher, Old Faience, The Brook, The Poplars, Under the Trees, Autumn, Fields, On the Way to Azy, Hillside, The Vegetable Garden, Sunken Garden, The Vineyard, and House and Hills. In addition to these works there were numerous compositions simply listed as still life. It is not clear whether Maurer titled these paintings himself, or whether the Folsom Gallery assigned these titles. Regardless of whether they were appointed by the gallery, Maurer likely approved them. It is interesting to note that there were no figure paintings included in this exhibition. One might surmise from this that Maurer was more industrious as a painter of still life subjects and landscapes. It is also possible that Maurer's figure paintings were not as well received as his still lifes and landscapes and this would thus account for their absence from the Folsom exhibit.

American.²⁴ These include Woman with Blue Background, (c. 1907, fig. 78), Woman with a Hat, (1907, fig. 74), Head of a Woman, (c. 1908, fig. 79), Buste de Femme, (c. 1910, fig. 80), Portrait of a Woman (n.d., fig. 81), and Woman (n.d., fig. 82). Maurer certainly executed other similar compositions, but no others have been identified.

Maurer's figurative imagery portrays women exclusively and was likely rendered as formal exercises. The individuals depicted are anonymous, but given Maurer's practice of rooting his paintings in nature, it is safe to assume that these paintings are loosely based on human referents, and were not solely the product of Maurer's imagination. They were constructed in terms of color relations and are governed by the essence of the subjects portrayed.

Maurer's figural paintings could not have been conceived without knowledge of van Gogh and Gauguin's daring portraits, which he could have seen at the Salon exhibitions. However, they most directly reflect the artistic principles articulated in two of Matisse's most important works, the dramatic Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Line), (1905, Statens

²⁴ See for instance, Arthur B. Carles, Portrait of Helen Ten Broeck Erben Fellows, c. 1912 (Private collection, Philadelphia); Abraham Walkowitz, Woman's Head, 1908 (Maurice H. and Margery Katz, Los Angeles); Henry Lyman Sayen, Portrait of a Girl, c. 1909-14 (Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.); Morton Livingston Schamberg, Portrait of Fanette Reider, c. 1912 (Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts), and Walt Kuhn, Master at Arms, c. 1913 (Private collection, New York).

Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen) and the radical La femme au chapeau (The Woman with the Hat) (1905, fig. 75). As noted earlier, Maurer would have first seen La femme au chapeau when it caused a sensation at the 1905 Salon d'Automne; later he would have had ample opportunity to study this modern masterpiece at Leo and Gertrude Stein's home after they acquired it for their collection in 1905. The intensely psychological Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Line) was likewise readily accessible to Maurer and other Americans at Sarah and Michael Stein's Left Bank loft apartment on the rue Madame. This painting was purchased by Sarah and Michael in 1906 and fast became one of the cornerstone works of their collection. This radical portrait of Matisse's wife was arguably the boldest work by Matisse at the time. It was, according to Matisse scholar Jack Flam, conceived as a coloristic response to Edouard Manet's 1872 Portrait of Berthe Morisot with a Bunch of Violets.²⁵ Rendered in a stark frontality, this portrayal plainly rejected the concept of modeling through tonal values and championed the use of a strikingly contrasted palette of pure flat pigments. It introduced

²⁵ According to Flam, the Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Line) was clearly a response to Manet's 1872 Portrait of Berthe Morisot with a Bunch of Violets, a work that Matisse would have seen in the Manet retrospective on view at the 1905 Salon d'Automne. Matisse was offering a coloristic response to Manet's use of flat planes. See Jack Flam, Matisse: The Man and His Art, 1869-1918 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 145.

Maurer and others to a new language of color, form, and space and forced them to reconsider the nature of modern portraiture.

In addition to being inspired by these two canonical paintings, Maurer's portrait work owes much to the figurative imagery of Paul Cézanne and Pablo Picasso. Cézanne's impact on Maurer and other American artists simply cannot be overestimated. Maurer and his compatriots, including Patrick Henry Bruce and Arthur Dove, essentially filtered their understanding of Matisse and Fauvism through Cézanne.

Maurer's 1907 portrait Woman with Blue Background (fig. 78) stands as a primary example of the type of Fauve work Maurer created through this filter.²⁶ It is a sculptural composition greatly indebted to a Cézannian conception of space. Following Cézanne's example, its form is modeled through color, and its color in turn is united with drawing. The painting's facture plainly reflects Cézanne's innovative paint handling which defined such works as Portrait of Mme. Cézanne (Detroit Institute of Arts), a canvas Maurer likely knew in 1907 and would later acquire for Albert Barnes in 1912 from the French dealer Ambroise Vollard.²⁷

²⁶ Sheldon Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932, p. 34.

²⁷ For additional information on this transaction, see Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

The sculptural sense of form inherent to Woman with Blue Background is superseded by a greater emphasis on two dimensional color planes in the 1907 painting Woman with a Hat (fig. 74). In this work Maurer constructs his composition with vigorous and excited paint handling and allowed color to function in areas in a completely abstract fashion; in the lower right hand passage, washes of green pigment are seized in motion as they run down the surface of the painting. This dripping element highlights the liquid, fluid quality of Maurer's medium and reinforces the immediacy and spontaneity of the work.

Maurer's use of hot color in Woman with a Hat is unabashed and insistent. The figure is set against a sketchy background aflame in tones of oranges and pinks. An unmodulated stroke of orange applied to the model's cheek and flashes of brilliant red paint used for her eyebrow and lips are an unmistakable nod to Matisse's Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Line). As Woman with a Hat clearly illustrates, by 1907 Maurer had discovered the extent to which his imagery could be governed by imagination and expression.

The directness of expression that characterizes Woman with a Hat is even more pronounced in Head of a Woman (fig. 79), a work that dates to approximately 1908. As in Woman with a Hat, Maurer interprets the figure

in Head of a Woman emotionally rather than logically. Broad strokes of tempera paint used throughout this portrait reveal the artist's nuanced understanding of the elasticity of his medium. Arbitrary patches of red color delineate facial features. A random streak of turquoise pigment adjacent to the figure's chin reinforces the artist's intrepid and unexpected palette selection.

This mask-like portrayal resonates with a raw essence commonly found in much of Picasso's work, including his 1905-06 Portrait of Gertrude Stein (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Maurer would have been familiar with this painting from visits to Leo and Gertrude Stein's home where the work had been on display. He would have been impressed by its pure elemental forms that were inspired by the Iberian sculpture Picasso had recently seen on view at an exhibition at the Louvre in 1906. Picasso's subsequent investigations such as his haunting 1907 Mother and Child (Musée Picasso, Paris), the many portrait studies based on Iberian masks, and the monumental 1907 Les Femmes d'Alger (The Museum of Modern Art, New York) categorically engaged Maurer's interests. There is no question that such imagery colored his consciousness during the creation of Head of a Woman. The influence of primitive art had permeated Maurer's painting by this time as it had the work of countless

artists, including Matisse, Vlaminck, Derain and other Fauves, as well as the German Expressionists like Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Matisse, who had been interested in primitive and exotic art for a few years, had, by 1906, come to appreciate fully the expressive possibilities that it offered. Picasso followed not long afterward. Maurer's precise acquaintance with such forms is not known; however, contemporary interest in tribal art and non-European art in general was widespread, and, as evidenced by paintings like Head of a Woman, it made a distinct impression upon Maurer at an early stage in his development as a modernist.

While Maurer typically submitted Fauve landscapes and still lifes to the annual shows at the Salon d'Automne, exhibition records indicate that he did not present modernist figurative imagery at this forum. He did, however, display two such works at the American Art Association in Paris in 1907. The following year he showed two modern figurative subjects at the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts Exposition—Mademoiselle Renée (location unknown) and Mademoiselle R.... (location unknown). These two portrayals were rendered in high-keyed chromatics and were more post-Impressionistic in spirit than properly Fauve in execution and conception. They were singled out for discussion in an article titled "American Pictures Admired in Paris," which appeared in The New York Times on April 19, 1908. Over one

hundred American painters were represented at this Nationale show. As the Times critic noted: "...The extraordinary share Americans take in the artistic life in France becomes more apparent every year at the annual opening of the salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts, the Paris Salon that is held every Spring in the Grand Palais. . . Alfred H. Maurer, another New Yorker, sends two striking portraits in his new Impressionist style, both of which have received much praise from Paris critics. These pictures show a wide divergence from Maurer's usual methods, and for this reason have created much comment."²⁸

6.5. Still Lives

Between 1908 and 1913 Maurer had approximately five still lifes displayed at the Salon d'Automne. He exhibited at this forum annually during this time, with the exception of 1911, when he submitted six floral paintings to the Independent Exhibition at the Beaux-Arts Gallery in New York.²⁹ Maurer was also represented by a still life subject at the Berlin Secession exhibition in 1907.

²⁸ "American Pictures Admired in Paris," New York Times, April 19, 1908, pt. 3, p. 1.

²⁹ For a review of this exhibition, see "Interesting Examples of the Work of Twelve Painters in the Independent Exhibition at the Beaux-Arts Gallery," New York Times, April 2, 1911, section 6, p. 15.

Maurer's lifelong enchantment with the subject of still life developed during his Fauve years and later found expression in the 1920s and 30s in the form of lively flower studies and highly inventive Cubist compositions. His earliest still lifes of note took three basic forms: highly patterned arrangements; still life motifs that focused on decorative objects, such as Still Life with Bowl, (c. 1908, fig. 83); and vividly colored florals. He often worked in series and painted variations on a theme using many of the same items in related paintings. He understood, as Matisse described in his 1908 essay "Notes of a Painter," that composition "is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the various elements at the painter's disposal for the expression of his feelings."³⁰

The still life motif provided Maurer with an opportunity to work with fixed, unchanging models and to explore the decorative possibilities of pure color. He proved to be especially adventurous in the color schemes he used in Fauve his still lifes and often arrived at unexpected juxtapositions. His sensual approach to color and his keen understanding of its integral ability to function in a self-referential fashion, links Maurer directly to Matisse and the other principal Fauves.

³⁰ Henri Matisse, "Notes of a Painter," reprinted in Jack Flam, Matisse on Art, p. 36.

Maurer experimented with a variety of painting techniques and styles in his Fauve still lifes. In some cases he focused on objects distilled into simplified, bold masses and forms and rendered in flat areas of color. In other instances, he allowed decorative patterning to define the character of a work. Occasionally he painted in thin tracts of pure color diluted by turpentine, which resulted in images that radiate with luminosity and suggested a light source that emanates from within the composition. Maurer's still lifes typically unite the plastic and decorative aspects of painting and highlight the play of spatial ambiguities. They reveal a strong preoccupation with shifting spatial dichotomies and draw heavily upon Cézanne's emphasis on shifts in viewpoint and nondenominative space.

These vivid paintings offer a synthesis of both a real and imagined space, and bring to light the world that exists between these two realms. Many reflect the artist's familiarity with the magnificent still lifes that Matisse painted during his most intense period of Fauve concentration from 1905-1908. They also provide evidence of Maurer's knowledge of the paintings Matisse created from 1908 to 1914, when Matisse expanded upon the lessons of Fauvism. Numerous interior and still life views by Matisse from this latter period, such as The Blue Tablecloth (1909, fig. 84); Goldfish (1912, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow), and Still life with

Oranges (1912, Musée du Louvre, Paris) were inspired by the study of the spatial construction of Persian miniatures. These objects provided Matisse with a novel way of understanding how to unite seen and imagined space in his painting. Their unique spatial orientation inspired him to digress further from nature and to take new artistic liberties in the design of his compositions. They were organized from multiple viewpoints and denoted different pockets of space; they were rendered with special attention to surface patterning.

The subsequent paintings that resulted from Matisse's newfound appreciation for Persian miniatures in turn impacted the trajectory of Maurer's still life imagery and offered the American viable solutions for bridging the boundaries between vision and imagination, nature and artifice. They provided Maurer with exemplary models for reorienting the traditional figure/background relationship in his work and introduced him to an alternative way of understanding the solidity of objects.

Maurer applied his new understanding of spatial dichotomies and tensions in his painting titled Fauve Still Life (c. 1909-12, fig. 76), one of his most purposefully ambiguous works. This animated composition reveals Maurer's concern with the abstract ordering of form, profuse patterning, and sharp color contrasts. The painting's collapse of spatial boundaries, and its

merging of background and foreground and walls and tables, introduces a new dimension into his art. The complex design and animated character of this image invariably summons to mind Matisse's profoundly influential painting Harmony in Red (1908, The Hermitage Museum, Leningrad), an image defined by powerful spatial polarities.

Maurer's Fauve Still Life like Matisse's Harmony in Red and The Blue Tablecloth, reorder notions of time and space in a thoroughly Bergsonian sense. In Fauve Still Life as in the two Matisse works, objects have been considered in direct relation to one another and the concept of negative space simply does not exist.³¹ Maurer followed Bergson's lead and defined reality as an endless flow of time. He showed it in a condition of flux, as if in a constant state of becoming. Maurer imbued his composition with the knowledge that objects take on meaning in the presence of their immediate surroundings. Removed from these circumstances, their meaning changes. The flow of time determines their temporal existence.³²

³¹ According to Henri Bergson, reality was comprised of all that we see as well as that which is not visible—negative space simply did not exist. As Bergson declared, "We must not suppose that our pen-stroke is self-sufficient—that it can be isolated from the rest of things. We shall see that it carries with it, whether we will or not, all that we tried to abstract from it." Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution. Translated by Arthur Mitchell, 1911 (New York: Random House, 1944 ed.), p. 309.

³² Bergson explored the existence of space and the idea of nothing, or what we might perceive as a void. He concluded: "... the representation of the void is always a representation which is full and which resolves itself on analysis into two positive elements; the idea, distinct or confused, of a substitution, and the feeling, experienced or imagined, of a desire or regret... But the illusion is tenacious. Though suppressing one thing consists *in fact* in substituting another for it, we do not conclude, we are unwilling to conclude, that the annihilation of a thing *in thought* implies the substitution in thought of a new thing for

In addition to reassessing the nature of time and space as translated in his paintings, Maurer was also mastering the art of weaving objects and colors into visually suggestive ensembles. He experimented with conveying the essential character of simple objects by transforming them into poignant signs and symbols. In Fauve Still Life for instance, he masterfully draws forth the substance of a lemon without relying upon mimetic reproduction. Using a few judiciously chosen strokes of yellow paint, he presents us with the sign for this fruit, evokes the very essence of it, and conveys the sensation it suggests. In Pitcher with Three Croissants (c. 1909-12, fig. 85), Maurer captures the elemental character of a group of croissants, but he does so without laboring over superfluous naturalistic details. He reduces these objects into simple geometric shapes, and then echoes their form in the handle of the white pitcher. This creates a dialogue between the various entities portrayed. In Pitcher with Three Croissants, the contemporaneous Still Life with Breton Pottery (c. 1909-12, fig. 86), and Fauve Still Life (fig. 76) Maurer imbues inanimate objects with corporeality, turning them, in essence, into actors on a stage.

the old. . . the representation of a disappearance is that of a phenomenon that is produced in space or at least in time, that consequently it still implies the calling up of an image, and that is precisely here that we have to free ourselves from the imagination in order to appeal to the pure understanding." Ibid., pp. 308-9.

While decorative patterning is a defining element in all three of these works, it is used by Maurer with a greater sense of economy in other still lifes that focused instead on several carefully selected decorative elements. These objects are commonly French in character—pottery, for example, and have a strong sense of place associated with them. Maurer repeatedly painted the same items, sometimes only slightly adjusting their placement and other times adding and subtracting objects to the overall arrangement. Such is the case in the companion paintings Poule dans un nid (c. 1908, fig. 88) and Still Life (c. 1908, fig. 87). Poule dans un nid (“chicken in a nest”) is one of Maurer’s more playful images—a chicken painted on a bowl, which can also be read dually as a chicken in a bowl. The paint application in both this composition and its companion painting is typical of that found in many of Maurer’s still lifes from the time; brightly saturated colors are scumbled onto the painting ground, and stain the surface in a way that conveys a translucency. Poule dans un nid and its companion still life draw tremendous power from the simplification of their forms and the expressiveness of their alluring color.

Maurer’s fondness for full-bodied hues found expression in the brilliantly colored flower subjects he created during his Fauve years. Included in this category are Fauve Still Life (c. 1910, fig. 89), Still Life of

Zinnias (c. 1910, fig. 90), Flowers in a Glass Vase (c. 1910, fig. 91), Flowers in a White Vase (c. 1910, fig. 92), Flowers, Purple Background, Green Vase (c. 1911, fig. 93), Flowers (c. 1912, fig. 94) and Flowers in a Vase (1909, fig. 95) These striking pictures attest to Maurer's abilities as a colorist of the first rank and stand among the most impressive paintings of their kind.³³

Maurer's Fauve florals took two essential forms: arrangements rendered in a Cézannesque spirit and placed in what appear to be outdoor settings with allusions to nature, as exemplified by Fauve Still Life (fig. 89) and Flowers (fig. 94); and flower arrangements removed from their natural environs and situated in completely synthetic atmospheres with no tangible points of reference. Flowers in a Glass Vase (fig. 91), Flowers in a White Vase (fig. 92), and Fauve Still Life of Zinnias (fig. 90) offer three illustrations of this type of floral work. The paintings in this latter category are highly stylized, tightly controlled compositions. They tend to be contained, in contrast to the more expansive florals Maurer produced in the mid 1920s, which were calligraphic works that simply consumed space and are infused with a wild energy. In both the early and late flower pictures,

³³ Matisse and fellow Fauves Raoul Dufy and Kees Van Dongen painted some florals in 1907 and after, but floral subjects were not especially popular among the work of Fauve artists during their seminal period of production. See Oppler, Fauvism Reexamined, p. 172, n. 1. An exhibition at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in November 1907 featuring flowers and still life paintings by Matisse and several other Fauves would have been one avenue through which Maurer had exposure to such imagery. For a listing of the artists who participated in this show and an account of the works on view see Gordon, Modern Art Exhibitions, 1900-1916, pp. 233-34.

Maurer remained steadfast in his commitment to using simple, unadorned vessels to display his arrangements. These were usually placed directly in center of the painting's composition.

Maurer was particularly fond of painting seasonal flowers that were widely available between June and September. Presumably, it was during this period that he was most active in painting his Fauve floral subjects. Among the flowers that Maurer frequently represented were zinnias, asters, dahlias, ranunculus, and other similar garden varieties.³⁴ He also painted hydrangeas and bleeding-hearts. Maurer does not seem to have been especially concerned with portraying exotic blossoms, although in at least one instance, Flowers in a White Vase (fig. 92), he presented an elaborate arrangement that included lilies and what appear to be trumpet vines or nocotiana, very fragrant evening flowers.

Zinnias were a particular favorite of Maurers. He celebrated their full, round shape and bright colors in numerous paintings, but he did not always remain faithful to their botanical structure. In Flowers in a Glass Vase (fig. 91), for instance, he presents a group of colorful zinnias along with a flower shown on the bias that has the body of a zinnia, but the sepal

³⁴ According to the 1922 Barnes Foundation Charter list reviewed by the author, Barnes owned works entitled Dahlias (#365, 18 x 15 inches), Tulips (#412), and Pitcher with Tulips (21 3/4 x 18 inches). This last painting is likely the work now titled Flowers, Purple Background, Green Vase.

base foliage of an aster. In creating this composite image, Maurer willingly compromised verisimilitude for the sake of artistic composition. He was not concerned with presenting an encyclopedic categorization of the individual flowers he painted but preferred instead to capture the essential character of his subjects. In a work such as Fauve Still Life (fig. 89), for example, we read the mosaic of vividly colored blossoms primarily as a symphony of color, with little regard for the specific botanical forms represented.

One of the paintings in which Maurer most successfully distilled the character of his subject and explored the plastic and symbolic possibilities of color and form is Flowers, Purple Background, Green Vase (fig. 93). This work stylistically correlates stylistically to Matisse's 1906 Pink Onions (Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen), which was in Michael and Sarah Stein's collection, at the time clearly reflects the precepts outlined in Matisse's 1908 influential treatise "Notes of a Painter," with which Maurer was familiar. This essay reinforced the importance of self-expression, direct experience, intuition, and capturing the essential character of nature.³⁵

³⁵ "Notes of a Painter." was published in French in La Grande Revue, II 24 on December 25, 1908. It was translated into Russian and German in 1909. The first published English translation appeared much later in 1931 when Margaret Scolari Barr translated it for the Museum of Modern Art catalogue, Henri-Matisse Retrospective Exhibition, New York, 1931. See Jack Flam, Matisse on Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 260, fn. 1. Maurer was still drawing upon the ideas expressed in Matisse's 1908 publication "Notes of a Painter" in 1916, as a published statement purportedly written by Maurer for the Forum Exhibition catalogue makes clear.

Rendered in an overtly flat and synthetic manner, Flowers, Purple Background, Green Vase suggests a complete rejection of Cézannian passage and denies the three-dimensionality of the picture surface. Among Maurer's most symbolic floral studies, this composition is layered with allusions to the transience of time. The two tulips, which seem to grow from the neck of the green vase for instance, suggest a reference to such a life cycle. Moreover, the two abstract forms in the foreground, which are likely the tulips' disembodied petals, allude to the dying flower going to seed, which has been reduced by Maurer into a simple stamen and pistil.

Maurer used fields of vivid, saturated color that resemble stained glass windows, and broadly defined, intensely flattened forms to reduce the natural world into a meditation on the decorative. In probing the relationship between artifice and reality, he relied on extreme simplification of form and vivid chromatic harmonies. By the time Maurer executed this painting around 1911, he was in full command of Fauve pictorial strategies.

6.6. Landscapes

Maurer proved to be especially industrious as a landscape painter, as

was Matisse and his Fauve colleagues. Landscapes dominate Maurer's Fauve oeuvre, which is comprised of paintings that are anchored in reality but not bound to nature. As the critic Charles Caffin perceptively observed, Maurer's landscape subjects were "not aiming at the representation of landscape, but at the projection on the panel of the color-harmonies with which for the moment nature has inspired him."³⁶

Maurer experimented with a number of approaches to landscape painting and produced diverse works on this theme. He painted both pure landscapes and numerous scenes that included imagery of farmhouses and similar rural structures. There are rarely figures in his landscapes, nor are there references to daily concerns.³⁷ Maurer often executed these works *en plein-air*. He created small sketches like Fauve Landscape (c. 1907, fig. 96) and Landscape (c. 1908, fig. 97), paintings that communicate the immediacy of his reaction before nature. In contrast to many Impressionist landscapes, which highlight specific lighting and atmospheric effects and convey temporal experience, Maurer's Fauve landscapes project a timelessness.

³⁶ Charles H. Caffin, "The Maurers and the Marins at the Photo-Secession Gallery," Camera Work 27 (July 1909): 41.

³⁷ Maurer did include figures in several landscape paintings from this general period, but they are more Post-Impressionist in character than purely Fauve. These works are Figure in Landscape (Collection unknown), illus. in Sheldon Reich, A. H. Maurer, p. 39, fig. 24; and Woman in Garden (fig. 71).

As a landscape painter, Maurer completely abandoned an adherence to local color and used his pigments somewhat arbitrarily to construct space. He sought to show how color could function as the equivalent to natural light. In most cases, he eliminated the use of black because he believed it had a deadening effect on his paintings. In striving to achieve a harmonious balance of color volumes, Maurer considered tonal values first. His palette was typically comprised of high-keyed pure colors, including chrome yellows, emerald greens, cobalt and ultramarine blues, and rich crimsons. The artist's chromatic forthrightness impressed Charles Caffin who referred to Maurer's landscapes as "color notes of spiritual impressions received in the presence of nature. . . ."³⁸

Maurer's paint application in his landscapes was considerably varied. In Paysage (c. 1907-10, fig. 98) and related nature scenes, he worked in broad areas of saturated high-keyed color scumbled onto the painting surface. In picturesque images, such as Fauve Landscape with Train (fig. 99) and Fauve Landscape (fig. 96), both executed around 1907, Maurer constructed his paintings by means of color. He applied pigment in a broad manner and only selectively allowed areas of the painting's white ground to

³⁸ Charles H. Caffin, "The Maurers and the Marins at the Photo-Secession Gallery," p. 41.

peer through. In the 1913 painting Autumn (c. 1913, fig. 100) he used dense areas of enamel-like color to obscure the breathing white painting ground.

In Landscape with Houses (c. 1908, fig. 101) and similar compositions, any underpainting or layering of colors is completely obscured by the artist's linear, quickened, vigorous, and gestural facture. Each brushstroke functions as a single unit of energy, and the actual application of paint carries with it its own set of meaning separate from all other references. In Landscape with Houses, the two versions of Maurer's Fauve Landscape (c. 1908-10 figs. 102 and 103), and Fauve Landscape (c. 1908-10, fig. 77)—an image that reads like an homage to Matisse's 1905 Collioure scenes—bright, non-mimetic color, straight from the tube, is laid onto untuned gessoed boards and projects the effect of vibrating light. Color is united with line and functions as a single dynamic entity.

Underscoring each of these pictures as well as Fauve Landscape with Red Tree (c. 1908-10, fig. 104), is a definite emphasis on the rhythm and movement of the land, which is presented in a state of flux rather than as a static entity. The viewer is acutely aware of the artist's technique and touch and made to feel as if a witness to the act of painting. One can see how Maurer built up his pictures from the white ground and constructed them stroke by stroke. With each brushmark he activated the pictorial surface and

imbued it with meaning. In assembling his compositions this way, Maurer was drawing, as were his Fauve counterparts, upon the example of Cézanne's late work, where the white ground of a picture, sometimes viewed as a metaphysical void, was transformed into a field of energy once stimulated by the application of paint.

A great many of Maurer's Fauve landscapes were painted in the Champagne region just northeast of Paris. The artist worked primarily in three towns along the Marne: Chezy-sur-Marne, Château Thierry, and Chalons sur-Marne.³⁹ What first brought Maurer to this area as early as 1902 is unclear, but its close proximity to Paris and its accessibility by rail surely contributed to its appeal. Excursions to this region provided Maurer not only with a retreat from Paris, but also a place where he could indulge in his two favorite activities, painting and fishing.

In choosing to paint in the Champagne region, Maurer followed a different path than his Fauve counterparts who preferred to visit and portray

³⁹ Elizabeth McCausland interviewed and corresponded with a number of Maurer's friends who confirmed that Maurer did indeed spend a great deal of time painting in the Champagne region of France. See for example, Eliot Clark's February 22, 1948 letter to McCausland in the McCausland Papers, AAA, D379, frame 1327. Eliot Clark was in France from 1905 until 1907 and for several months lived in the same inn as Maurer at Chezy sur Marne. Mahonri Young also talked about spending time with Maurer in the Champagne region. See Norma Davis, A Song of Joys: The Biography of Mahonri Mackintosh Young, Sculptor, Painter, Etcher (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University), pp. 62, 65, fn. 37. William Glackens likewise recalled a visiting Maurer in Chalons sur-Marne and going with him to Château-Thierry. See Ira Glackens, William Glackens and the Ashcan Group (New York: Crown, 1957), p. 70. Chalons sur-Marne is in the heart of the Champagne region. It has tree-lined riverbanks, 17th and 18th century houses and bridges that date back to the 16th century. Château Thierry is an industrial town 56 miles east of Paris and 6 miles southwest of Reims.

the sites on the Norman coast. In general, Matisse and his circle flocked to towns along the Seine, villages in the Midi, and they were drawn to areas along the Côte d'Azur. Around mid-decade they turned more of their attention to Mediterranean areas, such as Collioure, where Matisse and Derain produced some of their most extraordinary landscapes.⁴⁰

Many of the Fauves worked in groups and painted and traveled together, a practice that fostered a certain sense of give-and-take among artists. Maurer worked either alone or in the company of select friends, such as the painter Eliot Clark, Mahonri Young, Maurice Sterne, and, possibly, Arthur Dove at one point. Clark lived in the same inn as Maurer at Chezy-sur-Marne during several months sometime between 1905 and 1907.⁴¹ According to Young, a few years after 1902, "Alfy moved farther up the Marne nearer Chateau...He became interested in making flies for his fishing which seemed to take the place of his painting. He was at that time flirting with modern art."⁴² In 1906, William Glackens and his wife went to Chezy-sur-Marne with Maurer, where according to an account by William

⁴⁰ James D. Herbert, "Painters and Tourists: Matisse and Derain on the Mediterranean Shore," in Freeman, *The Fauve Landscape*, p. 153. Braque and Friesz painted at Sainte-Adresse as had Monet, Raoul Dufy, and Albert Marquet. Maurer portrayed this location in his painting entitled *Beach at Sainte-Adresse* (Berry-Hill Galleries, New York).

⁴¹ February 2, 1948 letter from Eliot Clark to Elizabeth McCausland in the McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 1327.

⁴² Collection Mahonri M. Young II, Archival Files.

Glackens' son, "Alfy had a cottage presided over by a thin, rather sour-tempered young woman who was presumably his girl." Glackens wrote to Robert Henri, "Teed and I have been down on the country for a few days, about 50 miles up the Marne. We spent one day at a place called Chateau Thierry. I certainly like those little river towns there is lots of go about them, bathing plages etc."⁴³ Glackens recorded this trip in his 1906 painting Chateau Thierry (The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, CA), a work that purportedly shows Maurer wearing red swimming trunks and preparing to jump into the river.⁴⁴

6.7. Fauvism on Display

When Maurer returned to Paris from his summer excursions to the country, he brought the landscape paintings he produced there and exhibited them at the Salon d'Automne. This venue typically featured an abundance of small landscapes executed in the summer months prior to the annual fall exhibitions. This salon highlighted a harvest of work created during the summer months of the year and thus functioned as a domicile for landscape painting produced out-of-doors during this time. Many of the landscapes

⁴³ Ira Glackens, William Glackens and the Ashcan Group, p. 70.

⁴⁴ Ibid. See also William H. Gerdts, William Glackens (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996), p. 79.

submitted to the Salon d'Automne by Fauve artists were painted directly before nature, and, as one scholar observed, were "impregnated with sunshine and painted as a study, or *étude*."⁴⁵ The works tended to be smaller in scale than the larger compositions that artists created in their studios during the winter months for the three spring salons.

The Salon d'Automne, which sought to establish a forum for modern art in France, offered competition to the other autumn salons held contemporaneously in Munich. Unlike the Salon des Indépendants, which was isolated from government support the Salon d'Automne prospered from government backing. It was indeed the more prestigious of the two shows, despite the fact that the Indépendants received equal press coverage and generally had a wider audience.⁴⁶

Maurer regularly exhibited modernist pictures at the salon d'Automne from 1907 until 1913. In 1912, he was named a *sociétaire* of this salon, a position of honor accorded to twenty-four Americans that year, including John Marin, Samuel Halpert, Patrick Henry Bruce, and Edward

⁴⁵ Roger Benjamin, "Fauves in the Landscape of Criticism: Metaphor and Scandal at the Salon," in Freeman, The Fauve Landscape, p. 247.

⁴⁶ Malcom Gee, Dealers, Critics, and Collectors of Modern Painting: Aspects of the Parisian Art Market Between 1910 and 1930 (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1981), p.13.

Steichen.⁴⁷ Although Maurer first participated in shows at the salon d'Automne in 1905, he did not exhibit his modernist work there until 1907 when he showed six landscapes. The following year he presented five landscapes at this salon and in 1909 he showed three. Maurer's contributions to the 1909 salon were recognized in the New York Herald and American Art News, the latter of which acknowledged the "three lovely landscapes" he had on view.⁴⁸ According to an October 1909 issue of the American Art News, this exhibition featured 1,808 works by 580 artists. It had "very liberally opened its doors to 259 outsiders, among others 38 Russians, 37 Americans, 32 Britishers, 30 Germans" ⁴⁹

By 1906, the presence of Fauve painting at the Paris salons was an expected event, albeit one that spawned lively debate and criticism on both sides of the Atlantic. The American sculptor Jo Davidson, with whom Maurer was friendly in Paris, offered the following colorful account of the excitement generated by Fauve pictures on view at the Salon d'Automne. He noted:

⁴⁷ See Carol Arnold Nathanson, "The American Response, in 1900-1913, to the French Modern Art Movements After Impressionism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1973), p. 122.

⁴⁸ This same article in the October 30, 1909 issue of American Art News (American Art News 3, no. 3, October 30, 1909) also mentioned the Chicago modernist Jerome Blum, who showed a painting titled Eglise a Chézy, and John Marin who presented a group of watercolors. The author reviewing the exhibition erroneously referred to it as the Salon d'Antonine, rather than the Salon d'Automne.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

The exhibitors had overthrown all the codes and all canons and no longer had any pope. They painted as they pleased. To say what one liked and disliked was the new trend—whether in harmony, discord, nobody cared.

Davidson reflected upon the wild display at the salon and noted the utter fascination, astonishment, and even outrage it sparked among viewers:

The effect on people who crowded to see that exhibition was extraordinary—crowds of people, some laughing, some jeering, others gaping with blank expressions. As we followed the crowds from gallery to gallery, we spotted an elderly man with white sideburns. He was dressed in a Prince Albert coat and silk hat and carried a gold-topped cane. He was furious. He took the exhibition as a personal insult and kept muttering, *Les salauds! Les cochons! Il faut les tuer!* (The dirty dogs! The pigs! They ought to be shot) I was fascinated. I had never realized that pictures could arouse such passion in a human being.

Davidson could not resist comparing the radical reaction of the crowds milling about the Salon d'Automne to the more reverential responses he encountered at sanctioned museums like the Louvre:

How different were the crowds at the Louvre or the Luxembourg. They walked through the galleries silently, respectfully. Here they reacted violently. It was no longer a question of good or bad art—it was art of today. It did not matter whether I liked it or not, but I came away with an exhilarating sense of freedom. I gave up all idea of going home. In the cafés where the artists met there were great many arguments.

They divided into groups and called themselves Fauves and Post-Impressionists. I wandered from café to café where they met. I enjoyed them all. I no longer questioned. I just went on working.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Jo Davidson, *Between Sittings: An Informal Biography* (New York: Dial Press, 1951), p. 47.

The excursions Maurer made to the large public exhibitions, such as the one described by Davidson, afforded him direct contact with a variety of Fauvist work by diverse artists. A visit to the 1905 Salon d'Automne, for instance, offered Maurer access to the latest paintings by Manguin, Derain, and Vlaminck. There he also encountered examples by Matisse, including the influential 1905 painting La japonaise (fig. 75, The Museum of Modern Art, New York), which presented Maurer with a radical new understanding of complex spatial ambiguities in painting.

Although Maurer himself did not exhibit in the 1906 Salon d'Automne, it is safe to assume that he nevertheless visited this exhibition after he returned from Italy, where he had vacationed during the summer.⁵¹ On view at this salon were Fauve canvases by Camoin, Derain, Van Dongen, Manguin, Marquet, Valminck, Valtat, Dufy, Friesz, and Matisse, among those by other artists also associated with Fauvism. Also on display was a large selection of work by the Post-Impressionist artist Paul Gauguin, whose unique approach to color and space provided an invaluable exemplar to all artists working in the spirit of Fauvism.

⁵¹ According to dated postcards that Maurer sent to friends back in America, he was in Florence during the summer of 1906. McCausland Papers, AAA, D379.

Maurer was also undoubtedly influenced by the display at the 1907 Salon des Indépendants, which boasted 1,055 exhibitors and included such Fauves as Matisse, Camoin, Valtat, Marquet, Derain, and Vlaminck. Matisse was represented by Nu bleu (Blue Nude: Memory of Biskra) (Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore) as well as five works on paper. Later that year he displayed seven pieces at the Salon d'Automne, where there was a memorial presentation devoted to the work of Cézanne. Maurer had already been building upon the lessons of Cézanne for some time, but the selection of paintings on view by this French master undoubtedly reinforced the increasing relevance of Cézanne's work.

The six modern landscapes that Maurer showed at the 1907 Salon d'Automne offered him ample opportunity to measure himself against the work of other exhibitors painting in a Fauve manner, including Derain, Braque, Dufy, Friesz, Manguin, Marquet, Vlaminck, and of course, Matisse. At the 1908 Salon des Indépendants, which Maurer likely attended, he would have seen striking paintings by artists such as Camoin, Derain, van Dongen, Dufy, Manguin, Marquet, Vlaminck. While Matisse's work was noticeably absent from this exhibit, it was honored this same year in an exhibition section devoted to him at the Salon d'Automne. The impact that Matisse's critically acclaimed presentation of eleven paintings, six drawings,

and thirteen sculptures had on Maurer, who had presented one still life and five landscapes in this exhibition, was certainly pronounced.

Beyond the large exhibitions at the salons, Maurer had additional opportunities to study diverse manifestations of Fauve art at Parisian galleries, especially Galerie Berthe Weill, Galerie Druet, Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, Galerie Kahnweiler, and Galerie Volland.

Located on the rue Victor-Massé, the Galerie Berthe Weill was one of the key establishments to represent Fauve painting. In April 1905, the year Fauvism debuted, the gallery showcased paintings by Camoin, Manguin and Matisse. Over the next few years, it also featured the work of Derain, Dufy, Friesz, Marquet, and Puy.⁵²

The Galerie Druet, owned and run by Eugène Druet, was another prominent gallery in Paris where Fauve imagery could be seen by Maurer. It opened in 1904 and was located at 114 rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré. It featured works by Marquet, who had signed a contract with this establishment in 1905, as well as pictures by Matisse, the leader of the Fauves, who presented fifty-five works there in March 1906. The gallery

⁵² In March 1907, Berthe-Weill presented works by Camoin, Derain, Dufy, Friesz, Manguin, Marquet, Puy, and Matisse. In December 1908, the gallery exhibited paintings by Manguin, Puy, and Marquet.

also represented Fauve imagery by Camoin, Manguin, Marquet, and Friesz.⁵³

The well-known and influential dealer Ambroise Vollard, whom Maurer knew, likewise supported Fauve developments through exhibitions at his gallery located on the rue Lafitte.⁵⁴ This establishment was described by Max Weber as an “informal unpretentious boutique de l’art . . . where one was sure to find some of the most important pictures, unhung, some even unframed, and scattered around in the store.”⁵⁵ Among these important pictures were paintings by most of the principal Fauves.⁵⁶ Their work was available to be seen by the many Americans who visited, including Maurer and his friends, Leo Stein, Maurice Sterne, Mahonri Young, as well

⁵³ For a detailed listing of the works featured in exhibitions held at the Galerie Druet, consult Donald E. Gordon, Modern Art Exhibitions, 1900-1916 (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1974).

⁵⁴ Although Maurer conducted business transactions with Vollard on Barnes’ behalf in 1912, he undoubtedly had personal contact with Vollard long before then.

⁵⁵ “The Reminiscences of Max Weber,” transcript of interviews conducted by Carol Gruber (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1958), p. 65.

⁵⁶ Vollard’s practice was to purchase works directly from artists and often in large quantity. In September 1905 he signed a contract with Derain for the sale of eighty-nine paintings and in March 1906 he purchased one hundred and fifty works by Manguin. In April 1906, he bought the entire contents of Vlaminck’s studio in Rueil. Vollard acquired twelve paintings of London scenes by Derain in July 1906, and organized an exhibition of paintings and ceramics by Vlaminck in 1907. In March 1908, he presented a selection of seascapes, still lifes, and landscapes by this artist.

as the artist and critic Walter Pach, who acted as an intermediary between dealers and collectors.⁵⁷

Other commercial institutions that Maurer may have visited to educate himself about modernist developments included the Galerie Kahnweiler and the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune. The former of these was located at 28 rue Vignon and opened in 1907. The German dealer Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler was a great champion of Cubism and one of Picasso's primary dealers. However, prior to committing to Picasso and Cubism, he had taken a special interest in Vlaminck's work and purchased more of his paintings before the war than works by Picasso.⁵⁸ Kahnweiler also gave Kees van Dongen a one-man show in November 1908.

The Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, which was undoubtedly visited by Maurer, was located at 8 rue Lafitte. It was established in 1863 and was one of the largest galleries in Paris. In addition to its well-stocked inventory of nineteenth-century art, it had a contemporary department that, over the years issued contracts to a number of the Fauves including Matisse, Vlaminck, and

⁵⁷ Laurette E. McCarthy "Walter Pach: Artist, Critic, Historian and Agent of Modernism," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delaware, 1996), p. 90. For additional information regarding purchases Pach made from Vollard, consult the Archives Vollard, Musée d'Orsay Document Center, Paris. See for example MS 421:5 in the Vollard Archives.

⁵⁸ Malcom Gee, Dealers, Critics, and Collectors of Modern Painting: Aspects of the Parisian Art Market Between 1910 and 1930 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), p.52.

Dufy.⁵⁹ Bernheim-Jeune also supported the work of van Dongen. The gallery provided him with an exhibition in November 1906 and purchased eighty-nine of his paintings in 1908.

While the American Synchronists Morgan Russell and Stanton MacDonald Wright exhibited at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in 1913, it was rather uncommon for American modernists to find gallery representation in Paris during this general period.⁶⁰ There is no evidence to indicate that Maurer ever exhibited at any of the Paris galleries at this time, except for one instance in 1911, when he participated in a group exhibition at the Devembez Gallery. The Devembez gallery presented a display of work by American artists then living in Paris, including Edward Steichen, Lawton Parker, Richard Miller, Theodore Butler, Frederick Carl Frieseke, William Emile Schumacher, and Maurer. The noted French critic-poet Guillaume Apollinaire reviewed this show for the major Paris daily L'Intransigeant and noted in his review of this “pleasant” exhibit, that Maurer was visibly under

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

⁶⁰ Several American modernists, namely Morgan Russell and Stanton Macdonald-Wright, did occasionally exhibit in some of the Paris galleries. For instance, Wright and Russell presented their Synchronist paintings at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune from October 27-November 8, 1913. Russell also exhibited in 1915 at the Galerie Chaîne et Simonsen. He showed at Galerie Berthe Weill from January 28-February 12, 1919 and at Galerie C. Crès et Cie in a group exhibition on view from July 23 to September 30, 1919. In September 1920, he presented a series of Paris cityscapes at Galerie Cheron.

the spell of Matisse, right down to his signature.⁶¹ This was but one of many instances in which Maurer was compared to Matisse.

Although Maurer had extremely limited experience exhibiting at commercial French galleries he did in fact send examples of his modernist work to large-scale international exhibitions outside of Paris. Two of the most important of these in which Maurer showed were the 1907 Berlin Secession, where he presented a figurative composition of a woman, and the 1908 Berlin Secession, where he displayed one still life.⁶²

Keeping apace with the Secessionist spirit that was sweeping the art world from New York to Berlin, Maurer helped to found the New Society of American Artists in Paris. Through his involvement with this organization—that was formed in 1908 and lasted only briefly—Maurer hoped to support and encourage modernist endeavors. The New Society of American Artists in Paris was a splinter group of the more conservative, older association of the Society of American Artists in Paris. Its board of governors was comprised of Daniel Putnam Brinley, Alfred Maurer, Donald

⁶¹ Guillaume Apollinaire, *Apollinaire on Art: Essays and Reviews 1902–1918*, edited by Leroy C. Breunig and translated by Susan Suleiman (New York: Viking Press, 1972), pp. 138–39.

⁶² Like most of the modern paintings Maurer exhibited, these works have yet to be identified.

Shaw MacLaughlan, Edward Steichen, and Max Weber.⁶³ Arthur B. Carles, John Marin, Patrick Henry Bruce, Richard Duffy, and Jo Davidson were among some of the core members.⁶⁴ The painters associated with this organization were thoroughly committed to displaying imagery in the modern spirit and welcomed all American artists in Paris who worked in a modern vein.⁶⁵ Newspapers and art journals in the United States took notice of their efforts and kept Americans apprised of their activities. The New York Times, for instance, reported that these men were fighting to obtain official representation at an exhibition in Vienna, and that American painters throughout Europe were watching the new movement with utmost interest.⁶⁶

While Americans back home at this time were curious about modernist efforts abroad, they were more limited in their cultural mindset

⁶³ One of the criticisms that the new society had with the older society was that they “rigorously excluded all the younger and bolder painters from their exhibitions.” See Edward Steichen, A Life in Photography (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art, 1963), third page following plate 43.

⁶⁴ For the most comprehensive discussion to date on the New Society of American Artists in Paris see D. Scott Atkinson and William Innes Homer’s essays in The New Society of American Artists in Paris 1908-1912 (New York: Queens Museum, 1986).

⁶⁵ The New Society of American Artists in Paris stated that they were an organization that would be open to artists creating works in the spirit of modernism. See “The New Society of American Artists in Paris File” in the Edward Steichen Archives, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

⁶⁶ The New York Times, February 25, 1908, in document entitled “New Society of American Artists in Paris,” February 1908, Edward Steichen Archives, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. These artists never actually reached their goal of representation at these international exhibitions.

than their European counterparts. Sensitive to this fact, Maurer was still displaying his more traditional work in America prior to 1909, catering to the conservative tastes that prevailed there.⁶⁷ This state of American intolerance was glaringly evident when Maurer exhibited two of his modernist landscapes at the National Arts Club in 1910. As Arthur Hoeber wrote, Maurer's paintings were the byproduct of a "disordered mind:"

. . . the followers of Matisse, prominent among whom is Mr. Alfred Maurer, are in a bad way, from the sooner they emerge the better for everyone, especially themselves. Here Mr. Maurer offers two landscapes that do not even remotely approximate any phase of nature known to the writer. There are forms quite impossible of any sane analysis, trees with trunks of pure vermillion or uncompromising blue, and a general aspect as of the view of some disordered mind. Nor is it all palliated by any attractive display of color or tone or charm of variety, being on the contrary, the most crazy tomfoolery ever seriously presented to a long suffering public. Indeed it is quite impossible to believe the artist serious.⁶⁸

It would take the sustained efforts of such visionary figures as Alfred Stieglitz to help enlighten and educate American audiences about the merits of modernism. Stieglitz owned and ran the Photo Secession Gallery in New York and was the first to champion Maurer's Fauve work.

⁶⁷ Americans proved largely unwilling to embrace new forms of modernism. This was clearly reflected in contemporary American newspapers and journals, which often carried such headlines as "Salon Given Over to Freak Paintings: Ridicule Aroused by Many of Modern Works in the Fall Exhibition" The New York Times, October 11, 1908, section 3, p. 3.

⁶⁸ Arthur Hoeber, "Art and Artists," New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser, February 7, 1910, p. 8.

Chapter 7. Maurer and American Dealers, Collectors, and Exhibitions: 1909-1916

7.1. Early American Exhibitions: Maurer at Stieglitz's 291 Gallery

Between 1909 and 1916 Maurer established himself, with the help of Alfred Stieglitz, as one of America's great pioneering modernists. After several years of exhibiting his radical paintings in Europe, he debuted his vanguard Fauve scenes in 1909 at Stieglitz's 291 gallery, located at 291 Fifth Avenue in New York.¹ Stieglitz presented Maurer's paintings along with those of John Marin in a two-man exhibition, organized in large measure, by the artist/photographer Edward Steichen (1879-1973), a co-founder of the New Society of American Artists in Paris.

Alfred Stieglitz played a seminal role in championing modern art in America. He was a central figure and mentor to many vanguard artists, critics, and intellectuals, especially those within his intimate circle, who were the painters he called his "A-1 men"—Georgia O'Keeffe, Arthur Dove, and John Marin. Stieglitz was an iconoclast who considered art to be something akin to a spiritual expression, rather than a marketable commodity. He had a deep and abiding belief in the artist as creative genius,

¹ Over the course of his career, Stieglitz founded and operated several gallery spaces, all in New York City. In 1905 he opened The Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession at 291 Fifth Avenue in New York, commonly referred to as 291. This gallery remained open until 1917. From 1921 until 1946, Stieglitz established The Anderson Galleries, The Intimate Gallery, and An American Place, all of which were located in Manhattan.

and, as Sarah Greenough recently noted, he saw the artist as “capable of both begetting works of great originality and of divining profound, even transcendent truths.”²

Opened in 1905, 291 operated as a revolutionary outpost that initially showed only fine art photography before it featured other forms of fine art in 1907. The gallery fast became an oasis of modern, fine art in America as well as an avant-garde gathering place. It was a fertile environment where new ideas were ignited and experimentation and creativity were fostered.³ Stieglitz opened the doors of his elitist shrine to the American modernists John Marin and Alfred Maurer after just two years of displaying European modern fine art. He held the first non-photographic exhibition in January 1907, the Symbolist watercolors of Pamela Colman Smith. In January of 1908 he exhibited drawings by Auguste Rodin, and in April of the same year, he showcased a selection of drawings, watercolors, and etchings by Matisse. European modernism was still new to American

² Sarah Greenough, “Alfred Stieglitz, Rebellious Midwife to a Thousand Ideas,” in Sarah Greenough, et al., Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and his New York Galleries, (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art and Bulfinch Press, 2001), p. 44.

³ There is an extensive body of literature discussing Stieglitz’s vital contributions to modernism in America; two of the most invaluable resources are: Greenough, et al., Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and his New York Galleries; William Innes Homer, Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977); See also, Judith Katy Zilczer, “The Aesthetic Struggle in America, 1913-1918: Abstract Art and Theory in the Stieglitz Circle” (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Delaware, 1975).

audiences at the time of the 1909 Maurer/Marin exhibit, and the American modernism Marin and Maurer were exporting from Europe via their latest paintings was unprecedented in this country.

The Maurer/Marin exhibition opened at 291 on March 30, 1909 and remained on view through April 17. Although no catalogue of this show has come to light, contemporary accounts indicate that this exhibition was comprised of fifteen oil sketches by Maurer and twenty-four watercolors by Marin.⁴ The show was widely attended and financially successful and it resulted in sales of both artists' work. One account of the exhibition specified that the general public mainly purchased the Marins, "while artists primarily came to see and often to purchase the Maurers."⁵ During the organizational stages of the show, Steichen corresponded with Stieglitz in letters that addressed details such as the pricing of pictures on display. In one such note, Steichen suggested that the Marins should sell for between \$25 and \$35 dollars each, and the Maurers for \$30 a piece. Twenty percent of this money, according to Steichen, would go to the gallery. Steichen declared that the artists needed the money "badly," and he felt that at these

⁴ The exact works Maurer included in this exhibition has yet to be determined.

⁵ Alfred Stieglitz, "The First Marins at 291," (c. 1922), p.1. Alfred Stieglitz/ Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, box 98, folder 1911. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

prices, New Yorkers could buy the works “cheap.”⁶ Two canceled checks from Stieglitz to Maurer around the time of the exhibit, one for \$84 and the other for \$90, may offer an indication of sales that resulted from the show.⁷ The artist and collector Arthur B. Davies purchased three Maurers for \$90—\$30 a painting.⁸

Both Steichen and Stieglitz were extremely conscientious about the important role that the gallery environment had in contributing to the overall success of exhibitions at 291. They contended that the ambience and atmosphere of the space, down to the color of the walls and particular arrangement of furniture, affected the entire viewing experience. The installation of artwork was, as to be expected, considered a serious affair, and during the Maurer/Marin exhibit Steichen had very specific thoughts on this subject. He suggested that Stieglitz hang Maurer’s paintings, which measured approximately 8 by 10 inches each, centered as one group on a

⁶ February 1909 letter from Steichen to Stieglitz in Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O’Keeffe Archive, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, series I–VII YCAL, manuscript 85, box 46, folder 1095, series I: Alfred Stieglitz correspondence.

⁷ Copies of these two checks are on file in the Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O’Keeffe Archive, series I–VII YCAL, manuscript 85, box 53, folder 1299.

⁸ See Dorothy Norman, Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer (Millerton: Aperture, 1960), p. 72. For additional information pertaining to Davies activities as a collector see Judith Zilczer, “Arthur B. Davies: The Artist as Patron,” American Art Journal 19 (1987): 54–83.

wall. He even drew a sketch of how he envisioned the works displayed—five paintings across and three deep (see fig. 104a).⁹

The critic Charles Caffin had seen many of these compositions by Maurer in Paris prior to the 1909 exhibition and, according to Steichen, liked them very much. Steichen gave his own impressions of these gem-like paintings in a lengthy letter to Stieglitz:

The Maurers are certainly howlers as color and ought to make the people who kicked Matisse feel ashamed of themselves.—Everybody is jumping on the poor devil for going bad and he is having quite a time of it. But he's convinced that he is on the right road and is going after it hard—I think in these small things he has realized his aims more successfully than in his more important work.—I hope that these things will be appreciated—as they represent with two other fellows the best things I know over here...Both men have something keener and healthier to say than the regular studio 'jargon' afloat in New York shows.—One might say there was something of Whistler in Marin and Matisse in Maurer but that is really superficial in resemblance. . . Maurer brings his skilled technique to this work that gives him a luminosity of pigments that even Matisse does not get.¹⁰

Stieglitz recalled the general spirit of excitement incited by the Maurer/Marin exhibition:

291, the little fifteen feet square room was overrun with people. One hundred or two hundred daily for three weeks. There was the

⁹ Steichen sketched out the installation plan for the Maurers in his February 1909 letter to Stieglitz. A copy of this letter (fig. 104a) is in the Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, series I–VII YCAL, manuscript 85, box 46, folder 1095, series I: Alfred Stieglitz correspondence.

¹⁰ Ibid.

work of Alfred Maurer who, as the prize-winning American Whistlerian, had turned to *salte mortale* and become a rabid Matisse-ite. Here was his work, Maurer's, consisting of small panels, on the walls. All the famous artists of New York rushed up to see them... There was Henri and Glackens and Davies, Sloane, [sic] even Luks, Bellows, there was Prendergast, Fitzgerald, editor of "The Evening Sun"... There were all sorts of people.¹¹

The Maurer/Marin display was accompanied by a leaflet that featured an insightful statement about Maurer by Charles Caffin. Caffin's introductory statement offered a critical context in which to understand Maurer's latest work. He began by posing the question "Could this be the work of a man hitherto associated with low tonalities; which had been duly honored in America, where the safe thing always counts, with prizes and medals. Alas, it was true! Poor Maurer had left the sure path and was consorting with the prophets, the crazy seers—those who see." Caffin noted the strides that Maurer had made from his previous work and commented with relief that the artist had discovered other colors in his paintbox beyond blacks and "drabs of white." He noted "the indirect persuasion of Matisse," which enabled Maurer to see "not only local color, but visions of color, evoked from actual facts, by the play of his imagination under the spell of some particular mood." The critic seemed pleased that Maurer had "been

¹¹ "The First Marins at 291" (c. 1922), in Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, box 98, folder 1911.

drawn out-of-doors into the sunshine,” and he recognized that the artist was “seeking an abstract expression through color harmonies, as does a musical composer.” He poetically referred to the Maurers on view as “color notes of spiritual impressions received in the presence of nature” and suggested that the paintings be judged as “little creations of color beauty.” Caffin perceptively observed that Maurer was using nature as an armature “on which to hang the decoration of color fantasy.”¹²

Caffin’s essay was reprinted in the July 1909 issue of the quarterly magazine Camera Work. This issue of Camera Work also featured reprints of some press clippings. These included one by James Huneker who wrote for the Sun, another by Joseph Edgar Chamberlin that appeared in the Evening Mail, a third by Arthur Hoeber that had been printed in the Globe, and a fourth by Arthur Harrington that had been published in the New York Herald.

In general, critical reaction to the exhibition was decidedly mixed. The Chicago collector Arthur Jerome Eddy remarked that in “March 1909, John Marin and Alfred Maurer (the ‘new Maurer’) were introduced. The work of these Americans seemed to upset the equilibrium of the

¹² Charles H. Caffin, “The Maurers and Marins at the Photo Secession Gallery,” Camera Work 27 (July 1909): 41.

academicians even more than the ‘jokes’ of Rodin and Matisse.”¹³ One critic called the Maurers “nightmares.” James Huneker, who wrote for the New York Sun, labeled Maurer the “Knight of the Burning Pestle” and declared, “It is a cruel Eastern garden of writhing arabesques, that he puts before us. And yet—but let us wait; such attacks pass. Besides, this chap has talent as well as boldness.”¹⁴ Joseph Edgar Chamberlin’s sentiments surely echoed those of many who were baffled by Maurer’s curious, colorful imagery. In his review for the New York Evening Mail, Chamberlin exclaimed of Maurer’s paintings, “But his pictures! There is no understanding them. Two or three, indeed posses strong indications of internal feeling for the beauty of dazzling light, and for big, splendid forms in nature. But here is one which has in the foreground a great glob of color; what is it? A bursted tomato? A fireman’s hat? A red rock? A couple of people under the umbrella?”¹⁵ The ambiguity in Maurer’s paintings disturbed and mystified Chamberlin in 1909, but therein also lay a great part of the allure of Maurer’s work—the mystery insinuated by not always naming properties, the very suggestiveness of things, the play of forms.

¹³ Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O’Keeffe Archive, Series I-VII YCAL, manuscript 85, box 16, folder 367.

¹⁴ James Huneker, “Around the Galleries,” New York Sun, April 7, 1909.

¹⁵ Joseph Edgar Chamberlin, New York Evening Mail, April 3, 1909. Also quoted in Sheldon Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973), p. 45.

In 1910 Maurer showed again at Stieglitz' gallery. He presented a painting titled Garden Scene with Table in a group exhibition called "Younger American Painters."¹⁶ Maurer appears to have visited New York in January 1910, prior to this exhibition, which opened on March 21, 1910 and continued through April 15.¹⁷ Organized by Stieglitz, "Younger American Painters" highlighted the original contributions of nine American modern artists, many of whom were associated with the New Society of American Artists in Paris, namely Arthur B. Carles, Edward Steichen, Max Weber, John Marin, Laurence Fellows, Daniel Putnam Brinley, and Maurer. Marsden Hartley and Arthur Dove were also included in this show. "Younger American Painters" was the first group exhibition in the United States to feature diverse forms of American modernism that were all influenced by European modern art. According to an article in the April 1910 issue of Camera Work, the featured artists in this exhibit, though they worked in individual styles, were all joined by their departure from realistic representation, their embrace of color compositions rendered in cheerful

¹⁶ James Huneker commented on Maurer's submission noting, "A garden scene with tea table by Alfred Maurer is another vivid piece." See James Huneker's review of "Younger American Painters" in the New York Sun, March 19, 1910, reprinted in Camera Work 31 (July 1910): 43-44.

¹⁷ Maurer appears to have been in New York in January of 1910, prior to the "Younger American Painters" exhibit. According to a review in the New York Times: "Jo Davidson, the sculptor; John Marin, Alfred Maurer, Edward Steichen, and several others have gone to New York to show their works, some of which has made even Paris gasp." Unsigned, "To Stir Art Circles Here: Disciples of the Matisse Movement Expect to Cause Sensation," New York Times, Sunday, January 16, 1910, part 3: 2.

keys, and their emphasis on vitality in their work.¹⁸ Each of these artists was viewed in one way or another as a follower of Matisse.¹⁹

In contrast to the sharply mixed critical reaction to the Maurer/Marin show one year earlier, the response to “Younger American Painters” was, in general, more open-minded. Sadakichi Hartmann wrote favorably of the exhibit for Camera Work and praised the Photo-Secession Galleries (291) for having been “the first institution to offer the American public these latest revolutionary accomplishments in the domain of color.”²⁰ He expressed his attraction to the chromatic intensity of the paintings on view and noted that they “were not merely full sunlight effects but luminous harmonies or disharmonies—just as you like—plus color, actual color.”²¹

One unidentified critic (possibly Hartmann), taken with the presence of color in the works on display, called the artists “color-jugglers.” He noted, “at last we have come to the scarlet departure, pink, crimson and ruby shadows...Maurer and Dove both are believers in wine shadows, sky

¹⁸ Unsigned, “Paintings by Young Americans,” Camera Work 30 (April 1910): 54.

¹⁹ See for instance Guy Pène du Bois’ review “Followers of Matisse Exhibit at the Photo-Secession Gallery,” New York American, March 21, 1910: 8; reprinted in Camera Work 31 (July 1910): 46-47. See also A. Harrington’s review of “Younger American Painters” in the New York Herald, reprinted in Camera Work 31 (July 1910): 45.

²⁰ Cited in Sadakichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist Collected Writings, edited by Jane Calhoun Weaver (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 194.

²¹ *Ibid.*

blue waterfalls, chrome yellow rocks, brown snow, green skies, vermilion trees with violet foliage... These innovators are playing with colors.” The writer dubbed the innovative American painters the “pinkists” and observed that they were not aiming to create illusions of nature, “but merely decorative fancies, color nightmares that bewilder the believer in classic canonical beauty.” He closed his commentary by stating, “as the color is fading more and more out of old symbols, it is the painter’s business to create new ones.”²²

James B. Townsend of American Art News labeled the exhibit a “pathological art laboratory” and referred to Stieglitz as the “high priest.” He called the participating artists “young experimenters . . . birdlings, who are trying their wings.” Although Townsend decreed some of the work on display outlandish, even “productions of the criminal insane,” he found other submissions oddly enticing and rich with possibility. He saw the merit in paintings by Alfred Maurer, John Marin, and Edward Steichen, which he found “sane and which, either in richness and riot of color and sunlight, or in delicacy of tone, are delightful.”²³

²² Unsigned, “The Scarlet Departure,” in The Stylus I, no. 3, February 1910: 30. Cited in Sadakichi Hartmann: Critical Modernist Collected Writings, edited by Jane Calhoun Weaver (Berkley, Los Angeles, and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 194.

²³ James B. Townsend, American Art News, reprinted in Camera Work 30 (April 1910): 47.

7.2. The Independent Exhibition and the Patronage of John Quinn

A year after participating in “Younger American Painters” Maurer exhibited in a show called “An Independent Exhibition of the Paintings and Drawings of Twelve Men.” This exhibit, commonly referred to as the “Independent Exhibition” opened March 24, 1911 at the Society of Beaux-Arts Architects gallery at 16 East 23rd Street in New York. Organized by the artist Rockwell Kent, the “Independent Exhibition” featured 150 works by artists associated with Robert Henri and his circle like Arthur B. Davies, George Luks, and Maurice Prendergast. It also included paintings by vanguard American modernists such as Maurer, Marsden Hartley, and John Marin.²⁴ Maurer was represented by six paintings in this exhibit, including The Iron Table (c. 1910, fig. 105), which may, in fact, be the same painting Maurer exhibited under the title of Garden Scene with Table in the 1910 “Younger American Painters” show.²⁵

²⁴ Judith Zilczer, The Noble Buyer, John Quinn, Patron of the Avant-Garde (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1978), p. 22.

²⁵ On February 4, 1910, the critic for the New York Sun referred to a painting very similar to The Iron Table in his review of Stieglitz’s 1910 exhibition “Younger American Painters.” It is possible that the two paintings referred to are the same work, titled differently in each show. The reviewer wrote that Maurer “...went to the Salon d’Automne in Paris, saw Matisse and his followers...and saw there was no color in his pictures, and, more than that, no individuality...Now he is painting landscapes...and a tea table on the

Maurer's still life subjects on display at the "Independent Exhibition" captured the attention of a reviewer for the New York Times, as well as critic Royal Cortissoz of the New York Daily Tribune. Neither were swayed by Maurer's talent, as evidenced by Cortissoz's scathing comment "six times Mr. Alfred Maurer addresses himself to us as a painter of still lifes and it is six times in vain."²⁶ The collector John Quinn, on the other hand, recognized the merit of Maurer's efforts and purchased The Iron Table directly from the exhibit.²⁷ This was one of only two works purchased during the course of the show.²⁸

John Quinn was a prominent New York art patron who amassed an extremely important collection of modern art prior to World War II.²⁹ A lawyer by vocation, Quinn was a dedicated collector whose love of Irish art

lawn, which if you only take the trouble to look at them a while without prejudice, will tell you Maurer has discovered an individual expression."

²⁶ Royal Cortissoz, "Matters of Art," New York Daily Tribune, April 2, 1911, sec. 2, p. 7:1.

²⁷ "Interesting Examples of the Work of Twelve Painters in the Independent Exhibition at the Beaux-Arts Gallery," New York Times, April 2, 1911, section 6, p. 15.

²⁸ As Bennard Perlman has noted, sales from the Independent Exhibition were extremely poor, only two paintings sold. One was Maurer's The Iron Table, which Quinn purchased and the other was Arthur B. Davies' Refluent Season, which Edward W. Root purchased. Bernard B. Perlman, The Lives, Loves and Art of Arthur B. Davies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), p. 195.

²⁹ For detailed information pertaining to John Quinn (1870-1924) see: Benjamin L. Reed, The Man from New York: John Quinn and His Friends (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); Judith Zilczer, "John Quinn and Modern Art Collectors in America, 1913-1924," American Art Journal 14, n. 3 (1982): 56-71.; Judith Zilczer, The Noble Buyer, John Quinn, Patron of the Avant-Garde (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., 1978); and John Quinn Memorial Collection. Rare Book and Manuscripts Division, The New York Public Library.

and literature was eventually supplanted by his passion for French vanguard artwork. Quinn was thoroughly devoted to supporting the work of living painters and sculptors. His predilection for colorful, vital imagery led to his appreciation and purchase of The Iron Table, which, according to the art historian Judith Zilczer, was “one of the most advanced of his early acquisitions.”³⁰ In his discussion of Maurer with the artist Augustus John, Quinn explained that Maurer was, “a young American artist who is now in Paris and is painting in an entirely different key from what he used to... a high, bright key... I think artists are beginning to learn... that their pictures should not look as though they were painted in a coal cellar or in a prison cell . . .”³¹

Quinn was an exceptionally prescient collector who recognized Maurer’s artistic potential; however, he was not alone in his support of this artist. During the course of his career, numerous other collectors acknowledged the magnitude of Maurer’s talents and purchased his paintings. These patrons included William Merritt Chase, Alfred Stieglitz, Duncan Phillips, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, Arthur B. Davies, Gaston Lachaise, and art dealer J. B. Neumann. From

³⁰ Zilczer, The Noble Buyer, p. 22.

³¹ Ibid.

1912 to 1922, Dr. Albert C. Barnes, perhaps Quinn's greatest rival, acquired a considerable number of Maurer's works. Beyond this, Maurer and Barnes developed a unique business relationship that would ultimately prove to be mutually profitable.

7.2. Business Abroad: Maurer and Albert C. Barnes

By 1912, Maurer was acting as a European agent of sorts for Dr. Albert Barnes, the eccentric Philadelphian who was building one of the most extraordinary collections of modern art in America. Maurer had come to know Barnes through their mutual friend William Glackens, who had been an old schoolmate of Barnes' at Central High School in Philadelphia. Glackens and Barnes lost touch over the years, but reestablished contact around 1911. Subsequently, Barnes asked Glackens to help him reassess his collecting patterns and enlisted him to travel abroad to procure new works for his collection. In 1912, he gave Glackens \$20,000 and steamship fare to go to France to acquire modern paintings to replace the French Barbizon and Impressionist works in his collection. Maurer has long been credited with aiding Glackens, his friend since approximately 1902, on this quest. He was well entrenched in the Parisian art scene, familiar with its key players, and

thoroughly committed to modernist art. He undoubtedly reveled in the opportunity to help bring European modernism to American shores.

The Barnes-Glackens-Maurer triangle was, however, more complicated than this simple story suggests. The traditional understanding of events involving these three people casts Maurer as Glackens' Parisian "tour guide," the man who introduced him around town. This situates Glackens at the forefront of the purchasing and places Maurer in the shadows. At that time, however, Glackens' taste was relatively conservative and many of the art purchases may have more directly reflected Maurer's aesthetic sensibility. As Gertrude Stein later said of Maurer, "[I]t was he who selected the first lot of pictures for the famed Barnes Collection some years later faithfully and enthusiastically."³²

For a period of roughly two years from 1912 to 1914, Maurer was commissioned by Barnes to act as his European agent—as a liaison with the French art market.³³ During this time Maurer cabled the collector with

³² As quoted in Elizabeth McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography of America's First Modern Painter (New York: A.A. Wyn, Inc., published for the Walker Art Center, 1951), p. 88.

³³ This information was confirmed by Nicolas King, former Director of Education of the Barnes Foundation Art Department, Archivist, and teacher; interview by author, February 2, 1999. See also Fra Dana letter, in Elizabeth McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D377, frame 306. "Alfred Maurer at one time was delegated to buy pictures for Barnes in Philadelphia...But what pictures or when she does not recall." According to King, there is additional correspondence between Maurer and Barnes in the Barnes Foundation archives. I was, unfortunately, denied access to this material, which may well have yielded additional insight into the relationship between Maurer and Barnes.

information about burgeoning art developments in France and apprised him of public and private sales, gallery exhibitions, and other such events. When Barnes traveled to Paris, Maurer helped make hotel arrangements and organized other similar details. When Barnes was unable to get to Paris himself, he cabled Maurer to tell him what he wanted. Acting as Barnes' liaison, Maurer coordinated the details of many of the collector's transatlantic art purchases, arranged for the transport of French works to the United States, and supervised the framing of the paintings on Barnes's behalf. This latter endeavor was no small task, for as it happens, Barnes was fastidious about the framing of his pictures. He came to abhor the typical showroom frames that accompanied many of his new purchases and insisted on ordering hand-carved ones made in Paris.³⁴ In exchange for his services, Maurer collected generous commission checks from Barnes.³⁵ On December 13, 1912, Maurer also received a payment from the Parisian dealer Ambroise Vollard in the amount of 4,500 french francs "for

³⁴ Barnes also commissioned the artists Charles Prendergast, Robert Laurent, and Max Kuehne to make frames for his collection. See Richard J. Wattenmaker, "The Barnes Foundation," Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, in association with Lincoln University Press, 1993), p. 15.

³⁵ According to Nicolas King, these canceled checks are in the archives of the Barnes Foundation.

commission in Barnes sale” on the purchase of Cézanne’s Portrait of Mme. Cézanne.³⁶

Maurer introduced Barnes to many key figures in Paris, including Gertrude and Leo Stein. In addition, Maurer, and possibly Leo Stein too introduced Barnes to a coterie of Parisian art dealers such as Durand-Ruel. Maurer’s involvement in Barnes’ business transactions did not preclude the collector from conducting his own business affairs abroad. Barnes traveled regularly to Paris and eventually developed his own relationships with its dealers. He attended public sales of art and even bid against Vollard, Bernheime-Jeune, and Druet.³⁷

In 1914 Maurer ceased acting as Barnes’s agent and Leo Stein, who had been a kind of mentor to Barnes beginning in 1912, became more involved with Barnes’ business affairs abroad.³⁸ Stein occasionally helped make shipping arrangements for works, introduced Barnes to collectors and other important figures, and sold paintings from his own collection to Barnes

³⁶ A copy of the document recording this transaction was reviewed by the author at the Archives Vollard, Musée d’Orsay Document Center, Paris, MS 421: 4, 5.

³⁷ For a detailed account of Dr. Barnes’ affairs in Paris, see Anne Distel, “Dr. Barnes in Paris,” Great French Paintings from the Barnes Foundation, p. 31.

³⁸ Nicolas King has suggested that Maurer stopped acting as Barnes’s European buying agent because the dealers eventually came to know that Maurer was buying for Barnes, and the wealthy collector wanted someone who could represent him with a degree of anonymity. However, Maurer fled Paris in 1914 because of the war and his departure would have naturally made it impossible for him to assist Barnes in the same manner.

starting about 1913. In addition to Stein's assistance, Durand-Ruel Galleries acted as an intermediary for many of Barnes' business transactions with other dealers, including Ambroise Vollard. Durand-Ruel could acquire the same works that Barnes could, but at a dealer's discount, an arrangement that was extremely appealing to the collector.³⁹ Around 1921, Barnes appointed the dealer Paul Guillaume as his "Foreign Secretary" and Guillaume took over many of the responsibilities Maurer had handled previously. He also prompted Barnes' interest in African art and developed a privileged relationship with the collector.

Maurer's business arrangements with Barnes were not exclusively limited to the arena of art. Maurer also found additional financial security by selling samples of Argyrol—a silver-nitrate compound that Barnes developed in 1902 and manufactured in his plant the United States—to hospitals and doctors throughout France. Argyrol was used as an antiseptic to treat eye inflammations and it was the source of Barnes' fortune. Maurer received commissions on his sales of the product.⁴⁰

³⁹ John Rewald, *Cézanne and America, Dealers, Collectors, Artists and Critics 1891-1921* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 263.

⁴⁰ James Morrell also sold samples of Argyrol for Barnes, but he did so in Germany. King interview.

Beyond the business relationship between Maurer and Barnes already noted, the collector demonstrated his appreciation for Maurer's work by acquiring a significant number of his paintings over the years. Barnes collected a broad range of art, not by any means limited to the school of Paris. His enlightened approach to collecting led him to obtain the art of diverse cultures, traditions, and time periods. His collection brought together Eastern and Western art and included African tribal sculpture, Renaissance paintings, and works by the Chinese masters. Among the American artists whose works he collected were William Glackens, Maurice and Charles Prendergast, Charles Demuth, E. Ambrose Webster, Robert Henri, George Luks, John Sloan, Ernest Lawson, Jerome Meyers, Marsden Hartley, Andrew Dasburg, James Daugherty, Maurice Sterne, Arthur B. Davies, Guy Pène du Bois, and Alfred Maurer. While some of these artists—such as E. Ambrose Webster—had only a single work in the collection, others were represented more generously. A 1922 inventory of Barnes' collection reveals that by this time Glackens was represented by a remarkable sixty-nine works, Sloan by twenty, Demuth by forty-five, and Henri by three. There were eighteen Maurers in Barnes' collection in 1922.⁴¹ Among these were a

⁴¹ This information was obtained from a 1922 charter list of the inventory at the Barnes Foundation.

number of striking Fauve paintings such as Woman (n.d., fig.82) and Fauve Landscape (c. 1908-10, fig. 77).⁴²

Most of the Maurers in Barnes' possession would have been purchased directly from the artist.⁴³ In at least one instance, however, Barnes acquired a Maurer from an exhibition, the 1921 show "Later Tendencies," from which he purchased Head: Number III.⁴⁴ This work was displayed in Barnes' bedroom throughout the collector's lifetime, along with three paintings by Glackens and two by Jules Pascin.⁴⁵ Mrs. Barnes, who had her own art collection, kept a painting by Maurer in her sitting room.⁴⁶

Of the eighteen Maurers that Barnes owned in 1922, ten remain at the Barnes Foundation today; four are currently on public view and six are

⁴² Barnes discussed this landscape in a letter to Dr. F. G. Harrison of Philadelphia. "Your remarks about Kisling this morning, prompt me to send you a book and a painting, the latter being the next step in education. The book (page 9) defines education. The painting, by Alfred Maurer, was derided when I found him in Paris in 1912. Today he is sitting on top of the world. My suggestion is that you look at this painting every day and, if you look to see what is in it, and find that it says something new and worthwhile to you, you will find out what Dewey says education is." January 15, 1951 letter from Barnes to Dr. F. G. Harrison. Provided to the author courtesy of Simon Parkes, New York.

⁴³ As stated in a document provided to the author, "Miss de Mazia believes all his [Maurer's] works were acquired direct [sic] from him." Undated document from the archives at the Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania.

⁴⁴ The "Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings Showing the Later Tendencies in Art," on view at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was the first comprehensive showing of modern American art in an American museum. It featured 280 works by 88 artists. Barnes made other purchases from this show including works by Bernard Gussow, Andrew Dasburg, Thomas Hart Benton, Louis Bouché, Maurice Sterne, and James Daugherty. See document B0001821 from the archives at The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania.

⁴⁵ King interview.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

displayed in restricted areas. Included among this latter group is a companion painting to Fauve Still Life (fig. 76), a work that clearly reflects Matisse's profound impact on Maurer. This painting hangs in an administrative space that served as the bedroom in the Barnes house where Matisse stayed on visits in 1930 and 1933.⁴⁷

Over time, Barnes deaccessioned a number of his Maurers; he sold some and gave others away as gifts.⁴⁸ One such example is Landscape (c. 1908, fig. 97), a Fauve painting that Barnes gave to Albert Nulty, his former chauffeur who became a curator/conservator of the Barnes Foundation.⁴⁹ As was his tradition, Barnes sold paintings to employees at his factory, many of whom attended his voluntary educational "seminars" where they discussed a broad range of intellectual topics and analyzed art, literature, music, and drama. Paintings installed in the plant provided points of reference for

⁴⁷ According to Nicolas King, this painting hung directly across from the bed where Matisse slept at the Foundation.

⁴⁸ For example, according to records provided to the author by Nicolas King, in 1950 Barnes donated a small Maurer landscape (listed as No. 2019) to the Ft. Dodge, Iowa Museum along with two drawings by William Glackens and several other works. Also in January 1950 Barnes traded four Maurers to the art dealer J.B. Neumann for a \$900 Klee watercolor (The Klee is listed as no. 2532 in the Barnes Foundation archival records).

⁴⁹ Albert Nulty (1887-1957) began working as Barnes' chauffeur in 1917 and later became one of the trustees of the Barnes Foundation. Barnes paid to send him abroad for conservation training and for conservation study at home as well. Nulty and his relatives became extended family to the Barnes'. When Nulty died in 1957 he left Landscape to his daughter Jane Dixon and she, in turn, bequeathed it to her son Ed Dixon. I thank Ed Dixon for making me aware of this painting and for graciously sharing this and additional information about the Barnes Foundation with me over the course of several interviews between 2000 and 2002.

comment and debate among Barnes' employees. According to Art and Argyrol, William Schack's monograph on Barnes, there were rarely less than a hundred paintings on view at the factory and they were sold at cost to Barnes' employees.⁵⁰ In the late 1920s Barnes gave away a number of his paintings as Christmas gifts to employees at his plant; among these were works by Maurer.⁵¹ Barnes' relationship with Maurer did not end when the artist left France in 1914. Maurer maintained contact with Dr. and Mrs. Barnes and visited them several times, including in 1915, and corresponded with them over the years.

7. 3. Exhibiting at The Folsom Galleries and The Armory Show: 1913

The year 1913 was a watershed for Maurer in the United States and for modern art in general. It marked the first time his works were shown in America within the continuum of both European and American modernism. It was also the occasion of his first one-man exhibition held at the Folsom Galleries in New York from January 15-29.

⁵⁰ William Schack, Art and Argyrol, The Life and Career of Dr. Albert C. Barnes (New York and London: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), p. 99.

⁵¹ King interview.

The Folsom show, which Maurer likely visited while in New York in 1913, featured twenty-seven of his paintings.⁵² These works were described by contemporary writers as rendered in the spirit of Post-Impressionism and prompted a correspondent for the New York Evening Globe to declare Maurer “The First American Post-Impressionist.”⁵³ An unidentified critic who reported on the show for the New York Evening Globe credited Maurer with being the first American artist to “master this new form of art,” and announced that he was exhibiting his work in New York in order to educate his fellow countrymen about Post-Impressionism.⁵⁴ Whether this was indeed Maurer’s primary intent, there is little question that this exhibition contributed to the dissemination of advanced art in the United States.

Accompanying the Folsom show was a brochure that included statements by the influential English critics Roger Fry and Clive Bell. Their text, which discussed Post-Impressionism in general, was excerpted from the catalogue for the second Grafton Gallery Show, which was held in London

⁵² Several newspaper clippings indicate that Maurer was in New York at the time of the Folsom exhibit. For example, see Harriet Monroe’s review for the Chicago Tribune, February 2, 1913, section 2, p. 6. For a complete listing of the works Maurer showed at the Folsom Galleries see the Exhibition Chronology in the appendix of this dissertation.

⁵³ “The First American Post-Impressionist,” New York Evening Globe, January 22, 1913.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

from October to December, 1912.⁵⁵ While the text by Bell and Fry was not specifically written about Maurer, it provided a context in which to understand the artist's recent paintings. The inclusion of it was a clever sales ploy on the part of the gallery, as the brochure clearly, though indirectly, situated Maurer within the scope of Post-Impressionist aesthetics and specifically linked him to these two important critics.

The cover of the Folsom Galleries brochure read, "An Important Event of the Season, Is the Exhibit of Recent Paintings of Mr. Alfred H. Maurer of Paris." It lauded Maurer as "a master whose reputation in Europe and America is firmly established, whose work has been awarded numerous prizes of the highest class, and whose paintings are to be found in some of the best private and public galleries in America and Europe." Charles Caffin, a long-time follower of Maurer's art, took issue with these comments and, in a play on words, declared them "fulsome and a bit misleading."⁵⁶ He disapproved of the brochure's suggestion that Maurer's success resulted from his modern paintings, and argued that it was more a direct result of the artist's earlier Whistlerian work. Caffin reported:

⁵⁵ Earlier, in 1910–1911, the Grafton Gallery hosted a presentation of Post-Impressionist paintings that was a landmark in the English-speaking art world. This exhibit took place at the Grafton Galleries in London between November 8, 1910 and January 15, 1911. It was officially called "Manet and the Post-Impressionists." The term "Post-Impressionist" first came into common usage as a result of this exhibit.

⁵⁶ Charles H. Caffin, "Challenge to Tradition To Be Issued," New York American, January 20, 1913.

Some years ago Mr. Maurer changed from his harmonies of black, white and gray to lively schemes of primary colors. At the same time, he dropped the conventional point of view and took up with what were considered at the time the “Wild Men.” Like them, he flung overboard the tradition that a picture must be based on the representation of nature, and ran up the flag of the painter’s liberty, if he choose, to emulate the musician in making expression his chief motive.

He continued:

The musician takes a motive and out of it creates a composition. Similarly, Maurer and the others who paint in the like spirit, use nature as a motive on which to construct a composition which shall express the emotions which nature has aroused in them. It is what they feel about nature that is the actual subject of their picture; and since their feelings are abstract, they wish to make the expression as abstract as possible.⁵⁷

While Caffin recognized Maurer’s artistic goals as presented by the works in the Folsom exhibition, he was also critical of the artist’s recent paintings. He understood Maurer’s purpose in using radiant color, but felt the prismatic liberties taken by the artist did not excuse him from composing more of his paintings with greater care. Caffin found several pictures on view disorderly and noted that they projected a “distraction, rather than concentration of effect.” At the same time, he praised other examples for having “a degree of organic completeness that brings them within the category of actual

⁵⁷ Ibid.

creations.”⁵⁸ In the end, Caffin concluded that Maurer had “made immense progress in solving the difficulties of his later development.”

Another critic offered a mixed appraisal of the works on view and observed:

In painting figures, landscapes, or still life Mr. Maurer is not particular whether he makes the painting look like the object painted; all he seeks to do is to make the observer feel as the object made him feel. Consequently dishes, all “out of drawing,” seem about to fall off of tables, while trees and fields of landscapes are mere patches of color. In some pictures he has fallen short of his intentions and the beholder is bewildered. Other paintings are a delight because of their color.⁵⁹

The commentator expressed admiration for several of the paintings in the show including On the Way to Azy (location unknown); a work that he found successfully captured the mood of spring, and Border of the Village (location unknown), which, although a “poor medley presenting a broken down hut amid rocks and vegetation, with houses back of it,” projected a decisively “pensive feeling”⁶⁰ While he praised The Agate Pitcher (location unknown) and Old Faïence (location unknown), he deemed Autumn (possibly fig. 100) a “color discord.” The reviewer declared that this last work looked as if “the artist had placed on a palette all the colors needed to

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Unsourced reference cited in Elizabeth McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 116.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

paint an autumn landscape and then had upset the palette on a canvas.” He conceded, however, that “The colors are there and beholders with imagination can get a pleasing autumn sensation.”⁶¹

Harriet Monroe, critic for the Chicago Tribune, was not impressed by the Maurers on display at the Folsom Galleries. In a reference to the upcoming Armory Show, she noted that Maurer represented the “advance guard of that radical group which will seize the town in the middle of February when the new Association of American Painters and Sculptors opens its international show at the Lexington Avenue Armory.” Monroe was displeased with what she perceived as Maurer’s lack of originality and wrote:

Beginning as a follower of Whistler, Mr. Maurer has taken a long leap and cast his lot with the followers of Matisse. This indeed is the chief difficulty—he takes his cue from others. But if Tryon’s pictures are songs, Maurer’s are screams—nay catcalls, Tiger fights, whirling riots of wild yellows, reds, greens, and purples—thus does this American artist plead for the new anarchists, for the young fire-eaters who believe that art, to be saved, must first be destroyed.⁶²

Despite the negative commentary that Maurer’s exhibition elicited, this important event in the artist’s career was at least getting public notice.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Review by Harriet Monroe in the Chicago Tribune, February 2, 1913, section 2, p. 6.

According to a letter from Albert Barnes to Leo Stein, it had attracted considerable attention. As Barnes told Stein:

I suppose Maurer told you about his show and the big crowds that he drew every day. If he had been a few weeks later, when the effects of the big show were manifest, I believe he would have sold all that he exhibited. I enclose clippings about it and also about that of Glackens, whom [sic] I think is the strongest man in America.⁶³

The “big show” to which Barnes referred was the 1913

International Exhibition of Modern Art, more commonly known as the Armory Show. Maurer exhibited four paintings in this exhibit: Landscape (location unknown), Old Faïence (location unknown), Still Life (location unknown), and Autumn (fig. 100), the last of which was later acquired by Glackens. In addition to submitting these compositions, Maurer was approached by Arthur B. Davies, Walt Kuhn, and Walter Pach to assist in assembling the European portion of the show.⁶⁴ Pach was the European representative for the American Association of Painters and Sculptors (AAPS), the group responsible for organizing the exhibit, and was

⁶³ March 30, 1913 letter from Barnes to Stein, Leo Stein Collection, Yale Collection of Art and Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven. As cited in John Caumann, “Matisse and America, 1905-1933” (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 2000), p. 213.

⁶⁴ Kuhn recalled, that in Paris, “I looked up that old-timer, Alfred Maurer, who introduced me to the formidable Monsieur Vollard . . .” Walt Kuhn, “The Story of the Armory Show,” in The Armory Show. International Exhibition of Modern Art 1913, Volume III: Contemporary and Retrospective Documents (New York: Arno Press, 1972), p. 10.

instrumental in locating and procuring European works.⁶⁵ In an effort to be of assistance to Pach and his colleagues, Maurer introduced Kuhn to the Parisian dealer Ambroise Vollard, but, busy preparing for the Folsom exhibit, which opened just prior to the Armory Show, Maurer was unable to lend any additional significant degree of aid.

The Armory Show, which was primarily modeled after the large, 1912 international Cologne Sonderbund Exhibition, was an event of epic proportions.⁶⁶ It was on view from February 17 to March 15, 1913 at the 69th Regiment Armory in New York and traveled to venues in Chicago and Boston thereafter.⁶⁷ It reflected the growing anti-academic sentiment prevalent in the first decade of the twentieth century and was a crystallization of emerging interest in avant-garde culture in America. The exhibition proved to be the most important, grand-scale presentation of modernism in the United States. It featured approximately 1,300 works, and offered a

⁶⁵ For a detailed account of Walter Pach's involvement in the organization of the Armory Show, see Laurette McCarthy, "Walter Pach: Artist, Critic, Historian and Agent of Modernism" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Delaware, 1996), chapter 4, pp. 104-129.

⁶⁶ There is a sizable body of literature on the subject of the Armory Show. Three of the most indispensable resources on this topic include Milton Brown, American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1955); Milton Brown, The Story of the Armory Show (New York: Abbeville Press, 1963); Judith Zilczer, "The Armory Show and the American Avant-Garde; a Reevaluation," Arts Magazine, 53, n. 1 (September 1978).

⁶⁷ The Armory Show opened in Chicago at the Art Institute of Chicago on March 24 and remained on view there until April 16, 1913. There were approximately 500 objects on display at this venue. A modified version of the show, roughly 250 works, then traveled to Boston where it was on view at the Copley Society from April 28 to May 19, 1913. The Chicago and Boston venues were comprised mainly of European works.

survey of modern art, albeit one that was flawed, since German Expressionist painting was scarcely represented and the Italian Futurists were unable to participate. American art outweighed that of European, three to one, but the great focus was on French contributions, especially those of van Gogh, Cézanne, and Matisse, artists who had been extremely important to Maurer. Inclusion of their work in the Armory Show would have offered viewers contextual points of reference for better understanding Maurer's paintings on view.

The Armory Show stimulated considerable debate among artists, critics, intellectuals, and the general public. It profoundly affected the development of modernism in this country, a field that Maurer himself fervently championed. The exhibition generated a wide range of critical reaction.⁶⁸ It proved to be an artistic circus that aroused contempt, curiosity, and praise. It was both lauded and lampooned and was a magnet for publicity. As Frank Crowninshield recalled in 1940:

The Show, so greatly misunderstood at the time, created a major upheaval in American painting. It led, also, to most of our principle revolutions, during the past twenty-five years, in the fields of

⁶⁸ In a manifesto printed in the Armory Show's catalogue, one of its principle organizers, Arthur B. Davies, touched upon the aims of the exhibit and alerted the public that it was not the organizers intent to incite controversy. According to Davies, "In getting together the works of the European Moderns, the Society has embarked on no propaganda. It proposes to enter no controversy with any institution. Its sole object is to put the paintings, sculptures, and so on, on exhibition so that the intelligent may judge for themselves by themselves." Arthur B. Davies, "Explanatory Statement: The Aim of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors," *Arts and Decoration* 3, n. 5, (March, 1913), p. 149.

decoration, fabrics, women's dresses, typography, wall papers, rugs, photography, ballet, advertising, etching, and graphic art, and—though to a lesser degree—architecture. . . . For the first ten days, the attendance was extremely disappointing. . . the criticisms in the press had been excoriating. The old-line critics were not only baffled, but enraged at what they saw. *The New York Times*, in reviewing the works of these amazing French masters, said: "The Armory Show is pathological! It is hideous!" Royal Cortissoz, then, as now, an ally of the classical painters, said that "Cézanne, is merely a second rate Impressionist," and that "the only mystery in his case is all this fuss about him."

Kenyon Cox, in reviewing the Show at greater length for *The New York Times*, said that "These French painters are simply making insanity pay." *The New York Tribune* called it "Stupid license and self-assertion. Such art should be swept into the rubbish heap, since these men have no claims whatever to creating works of art."⁶⁹

Conservative critics such as Cox sounded a note of alarm, and he echoed the concerns of many conservative American artists who feared that the public might be seduced by the moderns and ultimately lose interest in their more traditional imagery.⁷⁰ By contrast, more open-minded and progressive individuals such as Walter Pach, Henry McBride, Frederick Gregg, Christian Brinton, and James Huneker sought to educate the public

⁶⁹ Frank Crowninshield, "The Scandalous Armory Show of 1913," *Vogue*, September 15, 1940, reprinted in *The Armory Show, International Exhibition of Modern Art 1913, Volume III: Contemporary and Retrospective Documents*, pp. 70-71.

⁷⁰ For additional insight into this subject, see Meyer Shapiro's essay on the Armory Show in Meyer Shapiro, *Modern Art, 19th and 20th Centuries, Selected Papers* (New York: George Braziller, 1978).

regarding the merits of modernism.⁷¹ Many of these men maintained that the new work on display was rooted in tradition and was a logical extension of that which preceded it. To this effect, Arthur B. Davies even drafted a chart that offered a chronological classification for the progression of modernism.

Regardless of whether one defended or condemned the controversial new art at the Armory, the unrest caused by this landmark exhibition was significant. It had tremendous consequences on the future of American art and culture, and would directly affect Maurer, who was to return shortly to New York for the remainder of his career. As Milton Brown observed:

. . .the Armory Show affected the artists of America. Those who had already become involved with the new tendencies were strengthened by the confirmation that they were part of the wave of the future. The younger men who saw the future for the first time were inspired to change directions. New Gods moved onto the stage and the old disappeared almost overnight. Perhaps the gravest blow was to Robert Henri and the Ashcan School; the former standard of progressive art was in eclipse and his troops were irretrievably scattered.⁷²

⁷¹ See for instance, Christian Brinton, "Evolution Not Revolution in Art;" Walter Pach, "The Point of View of the Moderns;" Frederick James Gregg, "Letting in the Light," Harper's Weekly, February 15, 1913.

⁷² See Milton Brown, "The Armory Show in Retrospect 1963," in the exhibition catalogue, 1913 Armory Show 50th Anniversary Exhibition (New York: Henry Street Settlement and Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, 1963), p. 35.

Scholars such as Judith Zilczer have successfully shown that the United States was by no means culturally barren prior to the Armory Show, but this dramatic event considerably augmented the avant-garde outlook in America.⁷³ In the wake of this exhibit, during the period when Maurer returned to New York, there was a marked increase in the appearance of new art galleries and organizations. Between 1913 and 1918, 34 galleries and associations sponsored approximately 250 foreign and American exhibitions. Many of these shows were intimate in scale and were featured at the new progressive galleries that now abounded.⁷⁴ Modern art, both European and American permeated New York on any number of levels. Works by van Gogh, Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, and Braque, and even African sculpture, were to be found in local galleries. This furnished Maurer with access to great examples of modernism in New York, such as those he had previously had access to in Paris. Outside of the galleries, salons and circles formed and strengthened, such as the one hosted by the art enthusiast Mabel Dodge, who opened her Greenwich Village apartment to artists, writers, politically oriented individuals, and others interested in cultural

⁷³ Judith Zilczer, "The Armory Show and the American Avant-Garde: A Reevaluation," Arts Magazine 53, n. 1 (September 1978), pp.126-130.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

affairs.⁷⁵ Maurer who was friendly with Maurice Sterne (who was briefly married to Dodge), may have visited Dodge's salon at some point. From 1914 to 1921, Walter Arensberg's circle served as a focal point for New York Dada, a haven for artists interested in conceptual art. Artistic individualism and experimentation were especially prized at Alfred Stieglitz's 291. Since the Armory Show, however, others had taken up the cause of modern art with new zeal and rivaled Stieglitz's support of modernism. Consequently, Stieglitz shifted greater emphasis to the artists of his circle, and his gallery became more exclusive. It was a "laboratory," and, in a sense, a private club, one "devoted to an artistic elite."⁷⁶

7.4. New York 1914-1916

Maurer returned to New York permanently in 1914 and found an art community that was undergoing many radical changes. He had fled France in August of this year at the outbreak of World War I and left the French countryside where he was working when hostilities broke out. When Maurer made his sudden departure he left everything behind except for what

⁷⁵ Mabel Dodge married the artist Maurice Sterne in 1917. Sterne was a friend from Maurer's early New York and Paris days. Though no record has come to light to indicate that Maurer attended Dodge's salon events, it is entirely possible that, given his ties with Sterne, he did at some point.

⁷⁶ William Innes Homer, Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1977), p. 173.

he could fit into one suitcase.⁷⁷ Maurer described the alarming wartime events unfolding around him and detailed his escape from the countryside in a lengthy but hastily composed letter to Fra Dana. A small portion of this document is quoted below:

I was caught in the country right on the line of mobilization, saw the train loads of soldiers going to the front and never thought a thing about it. Was trying to work, thinking of painting, whenever anyone talked of war to me I was more than convinced it was impossible. Here I was—nights I could hear the trains going by more than usual, and over night I was trapped.⁷⁸

Maurer had planned to return to France after the war, but as fate would have it, this would not be the case.⁷⁹ Instead, he settled permanently with his father (and his mother, who would die in 1917) at 404 West 43rd Street and, with the exception of regular excursions to the Hudson Valley, this became his primary residence for the remainder of his life.

⁷⁷ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 131. For additional information pertaining to Maurer's departure from France, see pp. 118-122.

⁷⁸ This letter from Alfred Maurer to Fra Dana, August 17, 1914, is quoted in its entirety in McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, pp. 119-120. For additional information pertaining to Maurer's departure, see the newspaper clipping which McCausland cited on pp. 120-121.

⁷⁹ It is not exactly clear why Maurer never returned to his beloved Paris. Undoubtedly, he planned to return after the war was over, but according to McCausland, Maurer's mother was the "core of his life," and when she lay dying in 1917, she entreated her son to promise he would never leave his father. McCausland noted "that this was a credible explanation for Maurer's long-continued, seeming dependency on Louis Maurer. If it is true, the deathbed vow was fulfilled in death." McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 143. In the Bernard Danenberg Gallery catalogue, author Peter Pollock noted, "Alfred could never find the means either to return to Paris or to have his paintings shipped back from his studio on the Rue Falguière." Alfred Maurer and the Fauves: The Lost Years Rediscovered, essay by Peter Pollock (New York: Bernard Danenberg Galleries, 1973), n.p.

Reestablishing himself in New York proved difficult at times for Maurer, both professionally and emotionally. On a personal level, living with his father presented a distinct set of difficulties for Maurer, whose relationship with his father was strained. Louis Maurer, a conservative artist, was disturbed by Alfred's conversion to modernism and purportedly had contempt for his son's radical work.⁸⁰ On a professional level, Maurer returned to the United States concerned for his artistic future. He sought to establish himself in the evolving New York art world and searched for venues in which to exhibit and sell his paintings.

Despite Stieglitz's early interest in and support of Maurer, he did not show any significant number of paintings by him at 291 after the artist's participation in the 1910 "Younger American Painters" exhibit. Maurer would not benefit from the kind of sustained patronage and support that Stieglitz showed Marin, Dove, O'Keeffe, and select others. Throughout the years, he maintained contact with Stieglitz (as correspondence between the two indicate) and in 1916, Stieglitz even entertained the idea of showing

⁸⁰ For Alfred, returning to live with his father under such circumstances was difficult. Many have noted that the strain between father and son manifested itself in Maurer's later work, some of which is suffused with strong emotive and even disturbing qualities. But this was only one facet of his subsequent production, and there were to be a great many paintings in which such elements of "disturbance" were decidedly absent.

Maurer's work again.⁸¹ In December 1916, Stieglitz reported to Dove, "Maurer was in this morning and brought me his very latest. Undoubtedly a development and I am mighty glad of it. I think later on I will give him a chance to see his work on the walls."⁸² After Maurer's death in 1932, Stieglitz once again talked about exhibiting Maurer's paintings: "An American Place [Stieglitz's gallery] ought to have some of his very best & show them. But only his very best as 291 really introduced him simultaneously with Marin—that is the 'New' Maurer."⁸³ When Maurer took up with the book and fine art dealer Erhard Weyhe in 1924, Stieglitz wrote to Weyhe to lend his support to the Maurer cause:

Dear Weyhe: You're a good sport. Thank heaven there is at least one in New York—in America—ready to back his enthusiasms for pictures and books not yet on the passbooks of the Institutions. You have done a fine thing for Maurer in more ways than you realize. You know I respect him and his work. He does know how to paint and his pictures are not manufactured.⁸⁴

According to Georgia O'Keeffe:

⁸¹ Maurer wrote to Stieglitz in 1916, "Daniel [Charles Daniel Gallery] will let you have what you want of my pictures." McCausland Papers, AAA, reel D379, frame 996.

⁸² Ann Lee Morgan, ed., Dear Stieglitz, Dear Dove (Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 1988), p. 51.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁸⁴ 1924 letter from Alfred Stieglitz to Erhard Weyhe. Quoted in Reba Williams, "The Weyhe Gallery Between the Wars, 1919–1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1996), p. 85.

When Weyhe showed Maurer, Stieglitz bought a couple though he had very little money. He bought again when the Maurers were auctioned. I think Maurer was just forgotten when he wasn't around as I have seen others forgotten, but when they are good someone gets them out into the world again."⁸⁵

Stieglitz kept abreast of Maurer's exhibitions over the years and, writing in 1924 to the author Sherwood Anderson, an ardent admirer of Maurer's work, Stieglitz bemoaned, "...Alfy has another show at Weyhe's. He has a few very fine canvases. But no one comes...Not even those who bought last year. The excitement—the story—is lacking. So why go? Why pictures?—that's typical of New York. Maybe typical of the whole country."⁸⁶

The fact that Stieglitz did not represent Maurer as one of his stable of artists has perplexed many scholars over the years, and has led to speculation about the status of Maurer's career had he become an intimate of Stieglitz's circle when he returned to the United States in 1914. Carl Zigrosser, director of the Weyhe Gallery and a friend to both Maurer and Stieglitz, discussed the subject. It was his impression that while Stieglitz respected Maurer as an artist and was pleased when Weyhe took him up, he

⁸⁵ As quoted in Sheldon Reich, *Alfred H. Maurer, 1868-1932* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973), p. 47. November 2, 1971 letter from Georgia O'Keeffe to Sheldon Reich, November 2, 1971.

⁸⁶ Alfred Stieglitz/Georgia O'Keeffe Archive, Series I-VII YCAL, manuscript. 85, box 2, folder 40.

did not favor his work enough to become his agent or patron. Zigrosser speculated that the reasons for this could have been related to personality issues or economic ones. But he noted that Maurer's case was similar to that of Marsden Hartley, Max Weber, and Abraham Walkowitz, who had been represented by Stieglitz for varying periods of time, but never enjoyed sustained support by Stieglitz.⁸⁷

By 1914, however, Stieglitz was not the only game in town. As previously noted, there were numerous galleries and institutions committed to representing contemporary American artists who were working in a modern vein. There were also large-scale exhibitions showcasing a range of recent non-academic work.⁸⁸ One such forum was the 1914 "Exhibition of Contemporary Art," at the National Arts Club, where Maurer presented two landscapes. Small commercial establishments such as the Charles Daniel Gallery, were also devoted to introducing the latest imagery by American modernists. Between 1914 and 1922 Maurer exhibited several of his paintings at this gallery.

⁸⁷ Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868-1932, p. 45.

⁸⁸ The "Exhibition of Contemporary Art" at The National Arts Club was on view from February 5-May 7, 1914. It featured some 200 non-academic works by Americans.

The Daniel Gallery, located at 2 West 47th Street, was an important venue for the display of vanguard art by Americans and Europeans.⁸⁹ The gallery was, as Daniel wrote in the introduction to his very first catalogue, “. . . dedicated to the younger painters of individuality, and to the older who have kept alive an ideal through many years of work and endeavor. The aim of this gallery is to encourage individuality and promote a general appreciation of the finer things in art.”⁹⁰

Over its nineteen years in existence from 1913 to 1932, the Daniel Gallery featured many important solo exhibitions by such innovative artists as Charles Demuth, Man Ray, Marsden Hartley, Stanton MacDonald-Wright, John Marin, Preston Dickinson, and many other lesser-known American modernists.⁹¹ It also sponsored a broad range of group exhibitions. Maurer participated in such shows in 1914, 1915, 1919, 1921, and 1922.

Charles Daniel acquired many of the paintings for his gallery directly from the artists he supported and also purchased them from other galleries and dealers, particularly from Stieglitz. In 1914, for example, he

⁸⁹ The Daniel Gallery moved to 600 Madison Avenue in 1924.

⁹⁰ Charles Daniel and the Daniel Gallery, 1913-32. Essay by Julie Melby, (New York: Zabriskie Gallery, 1993), p.6.

⁹¹ For an extensive exhibition history of the Daniel Gallery, see Julie Melby, “A Record of Charles Daniel and the Daniel Gallery” (Master’s Thesis, Hunter College, City University of New York, 1993).

bought a Maurer floral as well as a work by Abraham Walkowitz from the Folsom Galleries, where Maurer had shown the previous year.⁹² This Maurer purchase was likely one of the paintings that Daniel featured in his “Flower Paintings” exhibit on view from April 22 to May 13, 1914. Included in this show were pictures by Marsden Hartley, William Schumacher, Marguerite Zorach, William Zorach, Samuel Halpert, Maurer, and others. Though wrought with misspellings and conspicuously uninspired, American Art News offered the following account of this exhibit:

The “Flower Show” at the Daniel gallery [sic] . . . is not only appropriate to the season, but is well arranged and the works representative and well chosen. It is interesting to note the different expressions of the subject by the various artists. William E. Schumacher has three done in his “Neo-impressionistic” method, which lends itself happily to the painting of flowers. These have much life and color. Samuel Halpert has several Cezan-tresque [sic] compositions, in which, however, he expresses a personal note. Alfred Maurer is represented by one example and Gus Mager’s three canvases are decorative and masterly. There is a small work by Middleton Maigault [sic], typically good, and an interesting composition by William Zorak [sic]. In the outer gallery is a group of fans painted on silk by Margaret Zorak [sic].⁹³

Daniel apparently had a selection of works by Maurer at his gallery in 1916, and when Maurer was invited to participate in the landmark Forum

⁹² Melby, “A Record of Charles Daniel and the Daniel Gallery,” p. 18.

⁹³ Unsigned, “Flower Pictures at Daniels,” American Art News 12 (April 25, 1914): 6.

Exhibition of that year he wrote to Stieglitz, "I suppose Daniels will let you have what you want of my pictures, and if you use ordinary frames whatever expense you go to for me I'll settle on my return."⁹⁴ Both Charles Daniel and Alfred Stieglitz were instrumental in providing artworks for the "Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters," which was held at the Anderson Galleries in New York from March 13 to March 25, 1916.

The Forum Exhibition was the single most important show to date of American modernism. It was designed, in essence, to counteract the neglect that contemporary American painting had suffered three years earlier at the Armory Show, where it languished in the shadows cast by the European modernism that literally stole the show. Ironically, despite its nationalistic aims, which aptly reflected the tenor of the times, much of the work presented in the Forum exhibit could not help but reveal the dominant impact of European modernism, especially that of Fauvism and Cubism.⁹⁵

The exhibition was conceived of by the aesthete Willard Huntington Wright and was organized by Alfred Stieglitz, Robert Henri,

⁹⁴ Maurer was in Atlantic City with his father at the time he wrote this letter to Stieglitz. February 4, 1916 letter from Maurer to Stieglitz, quoted in McCausland, *A. H. Maurer: A Biography*, p. 137.

⁹⁵ For a discussion on the relationship between the 1916 Forum Exhibition and the prevailing spirit of nationalism during the period see, Christopher Knight, "On Native Ground: U. S. Modern," *Art in America*, LXX/9 (October 1983), p. 170.

John Weichsel, Christian Brinton, W. H. de B. Nelson, and Wright.⁹⁶ A display of modest proportions compared to the 1913 “big show,” the Forum exhibit was a survey of American art comprised of 166 paintings and 27 drawings by the following 17 artists: Ben Benn, Thomas Hart Benton, Oscar Bluemner, Andrew Dasburg, Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, Stanton MacDonald-Wright, John Marin, Alfred Maurer, Henry Lee McFee, George Of, Man Ray, Morgan Russell, Charles Sheeler, Abraham Walkowitz, and William and Marguerite Zorach. Maurer was represented by three still lifes and thirteen landscapes including In the Vineyard (c. 1912, fig. 106).

The work of these exhibitors reflected a number of strains of painting particularly prevalent in American modernism. Drawing upon Cézanne, Cubism, and Futurism, many artists, especially in the case of Maurer, were also plainly influenced by Matisse. The participants were associated in one way or another with either the Synchronist camp, the Arensberg Circle, or with Stieglitz’s stable of artists. The diverse works they displayed, many of which had already been shown at 291, Montross Gallery, and the Charles Daniel Gallery, highlighted the formal properties of

⁹⁶ Stieglitz, Weichsel, and Wright were primarily responsible for selecting the paintings on display in the Forum Exhibition. See Anne Harrell, The Forum Exhibition: Selections and Additions, (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1983), p. 5.

painting, the immediacy of experience, and the preeminent role of self expression in art.⁹⁷

The Forum Exhibition was accompanied by a 78-page catalogue. It featured an introductory treatise by Willard Huntington Wright, brother of the artist Stanton MacDonald-Wright, titled “What is Modern Painting?.” It also had forewords by each of the organizers, as well as explanatory notes by all contributing artists except Marguerite Zorach. A bibliography of books and articles on modernism, which further reinforced the educational mission of the show, was also included.

In his prefatory essay Wright demonstrated an obvious bias toward the art Synchronism, but also discussed how modern art was a natural outgrowth of many traditions. It is, he stated, “the art of yesterday heightened and intensified as the result of systematic and painstaking experimentation in the media of expression.”⁹⁸ The critic Christian Brinton emphasized the sincerity of this “new art” in his foreword and positioned it as part of a deliberate process of social and aesthetic evolution. Brinton

⁹⁷ In a review of the Forum Exhibition for the New York Mail, J. H. Chamberlain noted that a number of the works included in the show had already been displayed in the local galleries, and consequently, he felt that they lacked a certain novelty. J. H. Chamberlain, “Little Novelty in Forum Exhibition,” New York Mail, March 11, 1916, p. 7. See also Anne Harrell’s essay in The Forum Exhibition: Selections and Additions, p. 10.

⁹⁸ As cited in The Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters reprint ed. (New York: Arno Press, 1916), p. 16.

found a unity in the work of the moderns represented in the Forum Exhibition and observed that, despite superficial differences, “They are one and all striving to attain virtually the same end.” They are, Brinton declared, “seeking freedom from convention and the cant of academic dogma.”⁹⁹ In his foreword, Robert Henri praised the supremacy of individuality and the idea of an open forum in which to express oneself. In addition to reinforcing the fact that modern painting was very much alive and vital, W. H. de B. Nelson’s essay was a plea to appraise fairly “in a critical spirit free from prejudice and preformed opinion” the sincere efforts of the artists in the show.¹⁰⁰ Stieglitz stressed the need to support American modernists in their continued development and experimental quests. He saw this as essential to the evolution of American painting, while John Weischel discussed the role of art patronage and the need to “initiate the retrieval of patronage for the benefit of up-to-date art expression.”¹⁰¹ Weischel attempted to dispel the myth that American modernists were unschooled and untalented charlatans by stressing the fact that they were both qualified and reverent. He prophesied that their “deeply conceived work” would “command respect as

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 37.

valuable essays”¹⁰² Finally, Willard Huntington Wright’s foreword sought to differentiate between the “insincere” modern artist and those worthy, dedicated, and talented individuals represented in the present exhibition. He proclaimed, “Modern painting is not a fad” and implored the viewer to recognize the genuine merit of the works on view, which, he noted, were carefully selected by a responsible committee of men of varied tastes.¹⁰³

The lengthy “explanatory notes” in the catalogue, although a bit excessive, were intended to help illuminate the artists’ aesthetic goals. Alfred Maurer’s statement, which, it has been suggested, was perhaps ghost-written or executed with the aid of a friend, should be taken nevertheless as a reasonable articulation of his artistic philosophies.¹⁰⁴ A rare document such as this merits reprinting in its entirety:

My main concern in painting is the beautiful arrangement of color values—that is, harmonized masses of pigment, more or less pure.

For this reason, it is impossible to present an exact transcription of nature, for the color masses in nature are broken up by many

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁰⁴ In a letter to Stieglitz, Maurer announced that he was pleased to be asked to exhibit in the Forum Exhibition, but that he would not be able to submit the required 400 words artists’ statement articulating his aims in painting. “Four hundred words to explain my aims when they were never to write, not even letters. I can’t do it, so if this wont [sic] interfer [sic] with my exhibiting I will be delighted.” As cited in McCausland, *A. H. Maurer: A Biography*, p. 137.

minute color notes which tend to eliminate the mass effect. Consequently, I often use the dominating color in a natural object, and ignore the minor notes. By this process the *natural* effect is retained, and at the same time the picture becomes a color entity divorced from mere representation: and I have acquired a volume of color which will take its place in the conception of the picture. This, of course would be lost if all the details were truthfully set down: the many inconsequent aspects of an object would detract from the eye the final and pure effect of the work.

In order that I may express myself through the medium of color alone, I have eliminated, as far as possible, the sombre effect of black masses, and have keyed my pictures to a high articulation, so that the reaction to them will be immediate and at the same time joyous and understandable. Black, I believe, has a deadening effect in a pure color gamut, and I am trying to express the emotional significance of a scene without it, for pure colors are more moving than black, which is a negation of color.

It is necessary for art to differ from nature, or we would at once lose the *raison d'être* of painting. Perhaps art should be the intensification of nature; at least, it should express an inherent feeling which cannot be obtained from nature except through a process of association. Nature, as we all know, is not consciously composed; and therefore it cannot give us a pure aesthetic emotion. I believe that the artist who paints before nature should order his canvases; and in doing this he is unable to adhere exactly to the scene before him. The principles of organization and form, which animated the older painters, must not be ignored. They form the true basis for artistic appreciation. But the modern men can make use of these principles through a different medium. He can find a new method of presentation.

The artist must be free to paint his effects. Nature must not bind him, or he would have to become more interested in the subject-matter before him than in the thing he feels needs expression. In my case, where I am interested in the harmonic relation of color volumes, I consider the tonal values first. This is why my pictures differ from the scene which they might seem to represent.

Maurer's statement bears an unmistakable resemblance to sentiments expressed by Matisse in his 1908 "Notes of a Painter." In addition to parallels in language, there was an obvious confluence between Maurer and Matisse's work that critics frequently commented upon when discussing Maurer's paintings. For instance, in his review of the Forum Exhibition for The Nation, Frank Jewett Mather remarked upon this very subject. However, rather than just dismissing Maurer as a blind follower of Matisse, as many others had, he concluded that Maurer, as well as his co-exhibitor Abraham Walkowitz, had achieved a balance between the "syncopations of Matisse and a kind of personal symbolism."¹⁰⁵

When Willard Huntington Wright reviewed the Forum Exhibition for the magazine Forum, he remarked upon the simplicity of Maurer's art in comparison to that of Hartley, Dove, Man Ray, and several others. He referred to Maurer's compositions as "poeticized representations of subject[s]." In keeping with Wright's goal of advancing the public's understanding of abstraction, he discussed Maurer's relationship with nature and observed that Maurer used nature as an engine uses a track, to hold him to recognizable form. Wright praised Maurer's talent for constructing his

¹⁰⁵ Frank Jewett Mather, "The Forum Exhibition," The Nation 102: 2647 (March 23, 1916): 340. As cited in John Caumann, "Matisse and America, 1905-1933," p. 323.

pictures and called Maurer's paintings "expanses of pure joyous color, suitable to beautify any interior."¹⁰⁶

The Forum Exhibition represented a unique opportunity for Maurer to band together with a group of like-minded colleagues and publicly extol the virtues of modern American art. He along with the others involved in this exhibition, were united in their resolve to educate the public and establish American modernism as a vital and significant force. Collectively they made an important breakthrough in legitimizing American modernism and integrating the expressions of a new age into American culture.

Maurer had first begun to pave the way for greater acceptance of modernism in America as early as 1909 when he showed his radical Fauve paintings at 291 and established himself as one of this nation's first artists to work faithfully and successfully in the spirit of Fauvism. From 1909 forward, he actively participated in the dissemination of modernist aesthetics in America. By 1916, when Maurer showed in the Forum Exhibition, modernism was no longer a novelty on American shores. It had come of age. In the more receptive climate that followed, Maurer delved further into modernism, and in the next eighteen years, the last of his life, he created an extremely innovative and varied body of work.

¹⁰⁶ Willard Huntington Wright, "The Forum Exhibition," Forum, vol.55 (April 1916), p. 465.

Epilogue: 1917-1932

Later Exhibitions and the Weyhe Gallery

Beginning about 1917, Maurer presented his paintings annually in the non-juried, democratically-run shows sponsored by the Society of Independent Artists (SIA).¹ He was extremely active with the SIA over the remainder of his career, and in 1919 was named one of its directors. Maurer's involvement with this organization kept him connected to the art world in a way he would not have been otherwise, and proved to be an extremely important outlet for him both professionally and socially. Maurer's brother, Charles, and their father, Louis, also exhibited with the SIA in the 1920s.

From 1918 to 1932 Maurer sent paintings to exhibitions approximately two to four times a year. Since most of these works were generically titled it is difficult to determine exactly which paintings he showed, but it is more than likely that they were recent works.² While he

¹ The SIA was established in 1916 by Walter Pach, Morton Schamberg, Walter Arensberg, Albert Gleizes, and Marcel Duchamp, among others. It was open to both American and foreign artists who met the simple requirements of completing an application and paying an initiation fee as well as annual dues. Between 1917 and 1932 Maurer exhibited thirty works in the large, annual SIA exhibitions. In 1933, one year after his death, the SIA honored Maurer with a memorial exhibition. For a detailed listing of the works Maurer exhibited at the SIA see Clark S. Marlor, The Society of Independent Artists: The Exhibition Record, 1917-1944 (Park Ridge, N.J.: Noyes Press, 1984), p. 383.

² Maurer appears to have been extremely prolific in these later years. He produced a great many paintings, many of which vary in quality.

presented pictures in numerous intimately scaled shows, he mainly submitted his work to large-scale exhibits such as those sponsored by the SIA, as well as the annual exhibitions held at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and the Carnegie Institute. During these years, Maurer also participated in a number of museum shows that featured the work of contemporary artists.³

In 1924 Maurer found sustained representation with the Weyhe Gallery in New York. It was then that the book and fine art dealer Erhard Weyhe committed himself to the Maurer cause. Weyhe was a German immigrant who came to the United States in 1914, the same year that Maurer returned to New York from France. He specialized in the sale of art books and established a bookshop in New York in 1918, which would later be expanded to include gallery space.⁴ Within a few short years, Weyhe established himself as one of America's foremost print dealers. In addition to showcasing the work of foreign artists, he supported the efforts of a

³ For instance, in 1920 Maurer showed in the "Fourteenth Annual Exhibition" at the Albright Gallery, Buffalo Fine Arts Academy and in the "Exhibition of Paintings by American Modernists" at the Museum of History, Science and Art, Exposition Park, Los Angeles. In 1925 he participated in the "Exhibition of Paintings by Eleven Americans" on view at the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington, D.C. and in 1927 he showed in the Brooklyn Museum's "An Exhibition of Paintings in Oil by the Group of American Painters of Paris," as well as the Cincinnati Museum's "Thirty-Fourth Annual Exhibition of American Art." In 1928 Maurer exhibited again at the Cincinnati Museum in its annual exhibition and in the Phillips Memorial Gallery's show "Paintings in Watercolor by Seventeen American Artists."

⁴ Prior to this, he offered prints for sale through catalogues. See Reba Williams, "The Weyhe Gallery Between the Wars, 1919-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 1996), p. 45.

number of living American artists, including Maurer's friends Mahonri Young, Maurice Sterne, and John Marin, as well as other American artists among them, Rockwell Kent, Walter Pach, Walt Kuhn, Joseph Stella, Max Weber, William Zorach, Arthur B. Davies, Charles Demuth, and Earl Horter.

Weyhe was considered a kind and generous man who found great satisfaction in helping those less fortunate than himself. He was fully committed to furthering Maurer's career and helped him procure the long-overdue public recognition he deserved. As Maurer's dealer, Weyhe fervently defended the artist's work even when others simply dismissed it as vulgar. Weyhe's fascination with Maurer reached a new level in 1924. It was then that he purchased the entire contents of the artist's studio, some 255 pictures. Maurer received \$2,000 in exchange for the paintings and works on paper that Weyhe acquired.⁵ More importantly, for the first and only time in his career, Maurer had found the support and encouragement of a dealer who would demonstrate an unwavering commitment to his art.

Weyhe acquired his first Maurer painting in 1922 at an auction at the Anderson Galleries in New York, but it was not until two years later that

⁵ At the time Weyhe purchased the contents of Maurer's studio it would have been predominantly filled with pictures produced from 1914 to 1924. It is possible, however, that there were also a number of Maurer's early figurative paintings in Maurer's studio as well.

he aggressively pursued Maurer's work and bought the contents of his studio en bloc. Weyhe bought his Maurer pictures after holding an extremely successful exhibition and sale of Arthur B. Davies watercolors, when he was, according to the author Sherwood Anderson, "resolved to spend the 'easy money' he had made on the Davies sale in furthering the career of some more difficult artist."⁶ This represented the first time that the dealer purchased such a considerable body of work by one artist, and according to McCausland, Weyhe claimed that he did not care if he ever sold them, because he simply liked them.⁷ Furthermore, Weyhe assured Maurer that he would buy an additional twenty to thirty watercolors annually from him for \$35 a piece. He also gave the artist one-man exhibitions in 1924, 1926, 1927, 1928, and 1931.⁸

Weyhe sold twenty Maurers prior to the opening of the artist's first exhibition at the gallery, and, according to one account, sales of his work were steady for several years. A critic, who reviewed Maurer's 1927 show at

⁶ Reba Williams, "The Weyhe Gallery Between the Wars, 1919-1940," p. 84.

⁷ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography of America's First Modern Painter, (New York: A. A. Wyn, Inc., published for the Walker Art Center, 1951), p. 153.

⁸ On the occasion of the first of these, Maurer painted an alluring sign, which featured an image of one of his "girls" on each side, and hung outside the gallery (1924). A critic for the New Yorker saw the sign and commented, "Maurer we found dancing among his flowers at Weyhe, where he has hung out a sign converting that shop into his own." Elizabeth McCausland Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, reel D379, frame 496.

the Weyhe Gallery, reported that his works were selling tremendously and commented on his prolific output, noting, "... he can turn them out as only a recluse can."⁹ In the late 1920s, as the artist began to paint more challenging pictures, and as the Depression set in, sales were slower on average. Weyhe appears to have been rather open-minded when it came to acquiring Maurer's more radical departures in paint, such as Head (Cat) (c. 1931, fig. 107), but his support of such uneasy imagery was not reinforced by the general public.¹⁰

Exhibitions of Maurer's paintings at the gallery elicited attention in the press. Some of the earliest reviews of his shows were similar in spirit to the following commentary offered in the New York Sun, which noted "...last year he [Maurer] burst upon the New York art world after languishing in obscurity for more than ten years. Now everyone is curious to see his most recent works....there are landscapes that are rich in greens and studies of tree trunks lovingly painted with all their gnarled surfaces...."¹¹

As Maurer's work became more radical in the late 1920s and '30s, there was a dramatic range in critical response to it. Some art reviewers emphasized

⁹ Unsourced reference in McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 190.

¹⁰ Weyhe showed a range of Maurer's art, from pleasing florals to disturbing abstracted heads. He exhibited several of Maurer's pre-Fauve pictures as well.

¹¹ "Various Exhibitions in the Galleries," New York Sun, November 15, 1924, p. 7.

the curious nature of his paintings, while others demonstrated little patience for his enigmatic experiments and were even outraged at times. A small handful of contemporary commentators offered revealing comments and seemed to grasp better the complexity of his late imagery, particularly the “heads.” On numerous occasions, Maurer’s intensity and lack of restraint were singled out during this conservative period of American art.

Abstractions

Maurer created his first pure abstract compositions in the late teens, a move prompted in part by experiences with one of his closest friends, Arthur Dove, who was then experimenting with abstraction.¹² Maurer stayed with Dove and his wife, Helen Torr Dove, in Westport, Connecticut, for about eight months after his return to the United States. He had first met Dove in Paris in 1907 and later introduced him to Stieglitz. Dove, Maurer, and the illustrator Ernest Fuhr spent a great deal of time together in Westport, where they painted and sketched regularly.

¹² Sheldon Reich has suggested that Maurer’s first gestures toward abstract art may have been spurred by Dove’s example. Sheldon Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1973), p. 49.

During Maurer's time with the Doves, Arthur was working primarily in two types of abstraction. One was mainly lyrical and organic—similar to that articulated in Maurer's Abstraction: Fishing (c. 1919, fig. 108)—and the other was more geometric-based and related to the art of Picabia, the Cubists, and the Futurists. The few abstractions by Maurer from this period seem to follow these two patterns as well.¹³ Unlike abstract compositions by other artists, such as Wassily Kandinsky, Maurer's paintings were not layered with symbolic meaning, nor did they make any monumental claims of embodying universal truths. They were highly personal creations focused solely on the autonomy of paint and form. Maurer's interest in pure abstraction was extremely important to his development as a modernist, for it allowed him to indulge in the plastic qualities of his art, and to investigate a completely new mode of expression.

Landscapes at Shady Brook

In addition to visiting Dove in Westport during the teens, Maurer made regular excursions to Marlboro, New York, in southern Ulster County.

¹³ Discussing one of Maurer's abstractions, Kramer noted that it belonged "to a line of development, that reaches from Matisse to Robert Motherwell." Hilton Kramer, "Maurer: Lost and Found," New York Times, March 23, 1973.

Marlboro is a small remote area of the Hudson Valley, which, during Maurer's day was not typically frequented by artists.¹⁴ It is situated about one hour's travel from the well-known town of Woodstock, which, in contrast to quiet Marlboro, was a thriving artists colony during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵

Maurer began traveling to Marlboro and staying at a local boardinghouse there called Shady Brook about 1916.¹⁶ He continued to frequent this retreat in the country until 1931. It is unclear what first motivated him to go to Marlboro; however, the rich, cultivated landscape in and around this town with its fruit farms, vineyards, and rolling hills bears striking resemblance to some of the regions where Maurer painted outside Paris, which perhaps this contributed to the allure of this area.

Shady Brook provided Maurer with an ideal place to commune with nature. When not engaged in painting, he indulged in leisure activities with other guests at the boardinghouse, as well as with members of the

¹⁴ William Waltemath, with whom Maurer was friendly, was one of the few known artists who also worked in the immediate area of Marlboro.

¹⁵ Nearly a quarter of Woodstock's total population in the 1920s was made up of artists. For a historical survey of Woodstock's art community see, Tom Wolf, Woodstock's Art Heritage: The Permanent Collection of the Woodstock Artists Association (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 1987).

¹⁶ Maurer first signed the register at the Shady Brook boardinghouse in 1916. The register reveals that many of the same guests returned repeatedly each summer. None of these guests were well-known artists. This original register is now in the possession of Mary and Lou Menacshe, the current owners of Shady Brook.

family who lived there. Photographs of Maurer swimming, canoeing, and picnicking portray him as lighthearted and jovial, and document the kind of recreational pursuits he enjoyed during his visits.¹⁷

Maurer stayed at Shady Brook nearly every summer from May until October or November, and occasionally visited during the winter months as well. He was extremely prolific during these trips and purportedly executed as many as two or three pictures a day.¹⁸ He worked on a regular schedule, leaving the boardinghouse early in the morning and taking his camp stool and sketchbox out into nature to paint. While there, he had his own bungalow and studio where he kept all his painting equipment. One of the regulars at Shady Brook recalled the “many white ‘squares’ in back of his bungalow... pieces of material, some canvas, some possibly various material given to him...(as he was too poor to buy all the canvas he needed) and all coated with white lead to dry in the sun and then used as ‘canvas’ for him to paint on.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Information pertaining to Shady Brook was provided by Margaret Meckes Conrow. It was also obtained by the author from an audio tape made by Edith Caywood Meckes (former owner of the Shady Brook boardinghouse) on deposit at the Marlboro Free Library, Marlboro, New York.

¹⁸ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 133.

¹⁹ August 28, 1998 letter from Robert Robson to Margaret Conrow. Provided to the author courtesy of Margaret Conrow.

Many of Maurer's landscapes, including Bridge Over Shady Brook (c. 1916-20, fig. 109), were inspired by his immediate surroundings, where there were tall trees, shady streets, densely wooded paths, and winding creeks. Maurer was particularly fond of painting the local farmhouses, barns, tartarian cherry trees, high-tension wires, and telegraph poles that populated the area. He used rich colors and vigorous brushwork to ensure that his paintings would transcend mere copies of the scenes he was depicting.

Maurer's Marlboro landscapes were executed in a range of styles. Some were rendered in a high-key, Fauve-inspired palette, while others used a deeper color range. His brushwork also differed among paintings. At times it was rough and sketchy and in other instances it was more fluid. It even briefly became stylized and mannered as in Landscape (Entry into Shady Brook) (c. 1924, fig. 110), a work tame in color and highly naturalistic.²⁰

Many of Maurer's American landscapes created prior to 1920 bear strong stylistic resemblance to the French landscape paintings he executed

²⁰ Stylistically, there is a connection between Landscape (Entry into Shady Brook) and some of the 1930s Regionalist paintings of the American landscape. In contrast to many of Maurer's other Marlboro scenes, this one has an unmistakable American character to it. Maurer painted Landscape (Entry into Shady Brook) in the 1920s, at a time when many American critics were encouraging artists to disentangle themselves from European influences and focus on native themes and subjects. In this postwar period, one in which the United States emerged as a new global power, artists were encouraged to create artwork that could be considered distinctly American, and free from French influence. Artists increasingly sought to express their particular time and place. In Landscape (Entry into Shady Brook) Maurer lessened the radicalism of his painting style and captured the vernacular. However, it should be noted that Maurer generally stood apart from artists in the 1920s whose work was strongly tied to nativist impulses. Despite his brief flirtation with current ideas and themes in some of his Marlboro paintings, he remained a devout modernist, still bound to the European modernism that informed his early development.

before he left France in 1914. Differences between the French and American paintings can be subtle, and consequently many of Maurer's early American scenes are often confused with the French ones. In an attempt to differentiate between the two groups of works, Reich suggested categorizing Maurer's pre-1920 American landscapes into two groups: those that continue in the same manner as the earlier landscapes made in France; and those that are more Cubistic and abstract.²¹

Florals and Nudes

In the mid 1920s, Maurer began painting flower subjects with regularity, returning to a theme that he had successfully explored years earlier in France. A large number of these later florals appear to have been painted between 1926 and 1928. Many of them were executed in the medium of gouache, which was often combined with watercolor. Maurer began using gouache and watercolor actively around 1919 and demonstrated a masterful handling of these media.²² He found a certain fluency in them

²¹ Reich has noted that when Maurer worked in Paris or during trips home, he painted on stretched canvas, thick wood panels, and gray cardboard. His paintings executed in the United States, however, were often painted on Upson Board, with canvas occasionally pasted on and gessoed over this inexpensive support. Reich, *Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932*, pp. 55–58.

²² Discussing Maurer's use of gouache, art dealer Larry Salander noted that part of its appeal was "due to the transparent nature of this medium, which aided him in working out the strategies for his glazing in oils. It also helped him achieve the desired effect that the imposition of colors and glazes layered on another

that translated vividly into such paintings as Floral Still Life (Green Vase) (1926, fig. 111).

In addition to using watercolor and gouache, Maurer also painted floral motifs in oils and produced works such as Floral Still Life (c. 1926, fig. 112) and Still Life with Red Flowers (c. 1926, fig. 113). These paintings are candid in color and, like their watercolor and gouache counterparts, are notably untamed. Maurer most often painted vases overflowing with flowers, perched on small round or square stands, and placed in the center of a composition. As one critic observed, “In whatever he does, his design remains his steadfast friend—a composition that radiates from a centred[sic] point. The artist emphasizes again the fact that life lies in the design and not in the subject. His flowers are human beings with rich personalities.”²³

Maurer freely indulged in the play of spatial ambiguities in his flower pictures and frequently collapsed foreground and background into one pulsating field. As one author noted, in many of Maurer’s floral subjects the “background is random and decorative—just scribbles of color. More often it suggests a purposefully animated space... flowers are throwing off wild, ecstatic auras. They seem to consume space. They vibrate. Maurer’s garden

causes in the perception of color.” Alfred H. Maurer (1868–1932): Modernist Paintings (New York: Salander-O’Reilly Galleries, Inc., 1983), n.p.

²³ “The Humanity of Still Life,” The New York Times, January 10, 1926.

clippings aren't polite and elegant, like the poppy and primroses and daisies of Charles Demuth. Instead they are assertive and unnerving."²⁴

In addition to painting many of his florals in gouache and watercolor, Maurer used these media for a number of nudes he painted from 1927–1928.²⁵ He concentrated on this new subject matter just after he moved into a new studio location in the Lincoln Square Arcade Building at the corner of Broadway and Sixty-sixth Street in New York City. He hired a model to pose for him regularly in his new studio space.

Maurer's depictions of nudes took several forms. These include fluid and painterly works such as Two Nudes (c. 1927, fig. 114) and nudes that are primarily decorative like Two Dancing Figures (c. 1927, fig. 115). There are also ones that are more cubistic in spirit. These nudes are often featured in studio settings as is Nude (fig. 116), and typically shown standing in front of screens in architectonic, cubistic, shallow spaces.²⁶ In general, most of Maurer's figurative depictions tend to be cropped in such a

²⁴ John Loughery. "The Watercolors of Alfred Maurer, 1926–1928," Arts Magazine 59 (summer 1985): 124–125.

²⁵ Maurer later painted over many of the nudes he produced at this time. The reasons for this are unclear.

²⁶ William H. Gerdts notes that in these paintings of the nudes, "...simplified, twisting figures enclosed in rather sharply defined lines are flattened out, along with the upturned planes of their surroundings—a rather unique combination of fauve formal representation and cubist spatial distortion. The spectator seems to be simultaneously looking down, across, and up at the figure." William H. Gerdts, The Great American Nude: A History in Art (New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 163–164.

way that conceals the models' hands and feet. While certainly capable of painting these extremities, Maurer's lack of attention to these details most likely reflects his desire to exclude particulars that he considered extraneous to the overall design, since the emphasis in these paintings was clearly on the balance and design of the total composition.

At the time Maurer was focusing on these figurative subjects, he was particularly interested in Jay Hambidge's doctrine of dynamic symmetry and he relied on it as a guide for many of his paintings, including his landscapes and Cubist still lifes. Maurer utilized Hambidge's formulas and experimented with color by abandoning the traditional divisionism and color wheel.²⁷ He had attended Hambidge's lectures in Paris and owned a copy of his book, as well as a set of lesson sheets issued by Hambidge in 1921. Hambidge's theory provided Maurer and many of his contemporaries with mechanical and mathematical solutions to the organization of their compositions.

Still Lifes

During the 1920s and 30s, Maurer focused considerable attention

²⁷ McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 147.

on the theme of still-life painting. The three principal forces that informed the artist's late still lifes were, in varying degrees, the art of Matisse, Cézanne, and the Cubists. The earliest images to reflect Maurer's preoccupation with Cubist structures were painted around 1919. These were intensely colored, thinly glazed pictures such as Red Table-Top Still Life (fig. 117), which closely relates to Matisse's variant of Cubism, rather than the more familiar Cubist imagery produced by Picasso and Braque.²⁸ Around 1925 Maurer painted a group of still lifes that drew heavily upon Cézanne's instinctive approach to abstraction. Many of these images, such as Still Life with Pitcher and Fruit (c. 1925, fig. 118), feature fruit and pitcher motifs rendered in forms solidly modeled through color.

Maurer's most innovative Cubist work appears to have been painted between 1928 and 1932.²⁹ His still life compositions from this time are comprised of elements derived from both Synthetic and high Analytic Cubism. These works are highly individual, well-conceived essays, marked by a distinct inventiveness, rich, textural, and varied paint handling, and a

²⁸ Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932, p. 65. See also Alfred H. Maurer: Modernist Paintings (Salander-O'Reilly Galleries, Inc.), n.p.

²⁹ These dates reflect those set forth by both McCausland and Reich.

sophisticated sense of design. Maurer explored a range of compositional approaches in these late still lifes. He produced richly patterned decorative arrangements, such as Still Life with Candlestick, Brass Bowl and Yellow Drape (c. 1928-32, fig. 119), and also executed paintings primarily concerned with spatial fragmentation and the interpenetration of transparent planes as seen, for example, in Cubist Still Life with Red Lines (c. 1928-32, fig. 120). In works such as Cubist Still Life with Pear (c. 1928-32, fig. 121), he demonstrated a special talent for allowing color and form to speak without the aid of narrative.

In general, Maurer's Cubist imagery transcended a literal breakdown of form and space and was charged with energy and a passion for the physical act of painting itself. The actual objects that he portrayed were not of primary importance; it was irrelevant whether he was painting geometric blocks, a pear, a croissant, a pitcher, or a chalice. It was how he painted that set his work apart from others. His still lifes were distinguished by their inventiveness: their unique layering of colors (sometimes in transparent glazes and often juxtaposed against what appears to be decomposing, crumbling paint), the interpenetration of objects, the arrangement of flat planes, and the compression of space.

Portraits, Heads, and Figural Abstractions

Maurer started portraying the young girls around Shady Brook, around 1919 and in the years that followed, he painted these adolescents in an almost obsessive fashion. Many of Maurer's figurative paintings from the 1920s, now commonly referred to as Maurer's "girls," were derived from actual observation of the young ladies Maurer knew at Shady Brook, and those he encountered in the local town of Marlboro. Others, however, were only indirectly based on female types. In certain instances, the idea of these "girls" provided Maurer with a scaffolding for purely formal investigations.

Maurer's "girls" assumed a number of different characteristics over time. During the 1920s they veered progressively away from naturalistic representations and grew increasingly abstract in character. In works such as Head of a Girl (c.1925, fig. 122), Maurer stripped his subject of all corporeal volume and transformed it into an icon-like symbol for a female. Any semblance of the model's specific identity has been eradicated as the girl represented is distilled into a stylized type. This painting, as well as many similar depictions by Maurer, projects a kind of aloofness. It seems to have been painted from the perspective of a detached artist who observed his subjects, but never really connected with them.

In addition to single heads and figures, Maurer painted girls in pairs and in groups of three and four. The most common arrangement found in his work was that of two figures. These pictures are often referred to as the “sister” images because of the models’ striking resemblance to one another. The subjects, some of whom were likely related, were frequently shown at three-quarter length and depicted physically conjoined in some way, although ironically, this never seems to yield any psychological interaction between them. Art historian Percy North wrote in 1977 about Maurer’s obsession with these figures and noted that his “frequent rendering of them in identical pairs strikingly suggests a frustrating duality of internal struggle. In an era permeated by Freudian psychology the obvious interpretation is a split personality. It is difficult to ascertain the nature of the duality in Maurer, but his paired heads indicate an attempt to explore the subconscious regions of the mind.”³⁰ North also suggested that a number of Maurer’s “girls” may perhaps “express the artist’s attempt to explore the inner turmoil and alienation he felt as a result of his neuroses and homosexuality.”³¹ This assessment, of course, assumes, that Maurer’s

³⁰ Percy North, in Hudson D. Walker: Patron and Friend (University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1977), p. 12.

³¹ American Paintings and Sculpture in the University Art Museum Collection (Minneapolis: University Art Museum, University of Minnesota, 1986), catalogue entry by Percy North, p. 309.

heterosexuality was in question, and that his obsession with these girls was in some way related to this. There is no evidence to date, however, to substantiate such a claim.

Maurer's head and figurative paintings have long been the subject of enticing commentary. The tantalizing, bizarre pictures of long-necked ladies, with high, domed foreheads, rendered with stark simplification, have been compared to queens on a deck of playing cards and likened to antique urns.³² Contemporary critics often commented on the subjects' blank expressions, attenuated features, and wide-eyed gaze. A number of them also remarked upon a primitivist quality inherent to works such as Two Sisters (c. 1930, fig. 123).³³

The figural paintings produced in this vein prompted one author to refer to Maurer as a "Modern Byzantine," and the mannered quality found in such imagery has frequently drawn comparison with the work of Boticelli, whose art Maurer admired.³⁴ Maurer had seen Boticelli's paintings in 1906 in Italy, among other places. Postcards sent from him to friends in New

³² Emily Genauer, "Maurer Memorial—Reminiscences, Controversy, and Applause," Art Digest 23 (November 15, 1949), p. 44, as quoted in Reich, Alfred H. Maurer, 1868-1932, p. 102.

³³ "Maurer Shows a Decade's Work," New York World, January 27, 1924, p. 7.

³⁴ "Art Exhibitions of the Week: A Modern Byzantine," New York Times, January 27, 1924, sec. 7, p. 12.

York, showing Boticelli's Primavera and Calumnia, document Maurer's interest in the work of this Italian master.³⁵

The artist with whom Maurer's "girls" are most often compared is Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920), the Italian-born painter and sculptor who was in Paris at the same time as Maurer.³⁶ Like Modigliani, Maurer often painted his figures with exaggerated proportions reminiscent of stylized paintings of Madonnas by the old masters. Both artists shared a particular penchant for decorative modifications of their subjects. Despite obvious stylistic similarities between Modigliani's figures and Maurer's "girls," however, there are many factors that differentiate their imagery. As one critic observed in 1927, the spirit of the works is different: "Modigliani's feminine creatures are feverish, burning with an internal fire. Maurer's are calm of pulse."³⁷

Toward the last years of his life, this "calm of pulse" in Maurer's paintings changed radically as his heads slipped further into abstraction of

³⁵ Maurer's fascination with Italian art was nourished by his friendship with Leo Stein, who himself had a profound appreciation for Renaissance painting. See McCausland, A. H. Maurer: A Biography, p. 90.

³⁶ In addition to likely having seen Modigliani's earlier work in Paris, Maurer could also have had exposure to the paintings and sculptures of this artist in Albert C. Barnes's collection, in which, by 1922, there were approximately nine examples. Inventory list of Albert C. Barnes's Collection, 1922, courtesy Nicolas King.

³⁷ C. J. Bulliet, "Apples and Madonna: An Emotional Expression in Modern Art," (Chicago: Pascal Corici, 1927), p. 205.

two types. The first reflected Maurer's engagement with a more analytic Cubism, which aggressively permeated works such as George Washington (1932, fig. 124).³⁸ Cubist planar structures dominate this and related paintings, where human figures are reduced to a network of intersecting lines and masses. The second group of Maurer's late heads evolved into dramatically expressionistic compositions. Although painted in America during the harrowing years of the Great Depression, these late heads are best understood stylistically within the context of European modernist developments. They are similar in temperament to portraits by Georges Rouault, the German Expressionists, and Chaim Soutine.³⁹ Maurer's late abstract heads, with their intense emotional presence and highly tactile paint quality, reflect many of the characteristics visible in Soutine's impassioned abstractions. Images such as Maurer's Cubist Two Heads (c. 1930, fig. 125) are startling depictions that tend to be violently distorted. They marry Cubist structure and Expressionist form, while they subvert physiognomic accuracy for the sake of expressiveness. They are extremely individualistic, vanguard paintings charged with a restless energy.

³⁸ Maurer's George Washington was shown in the sixteenth annual exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists.

³⁹ Soutine's work received considerable attention in Paris when Dr. Albert Barnes acquired a group of the artist's paintings for his growing collection, with which Maurer was more than familiar.

Many of these late heads, particularly the abstracted double visages that completely rejected representational form, were wrought with tension and were considered exceedingly disturbing. These have often been seen as reflecting Maurer's own mental deterioration, which ultimately culminated in his suicide.

Maurer took his own life on August 4, 1932. He hanged himself in the family home, at 404 West Forty-third Street, New York. He committed suicide a mere sixteen days after his one hundred year old father passed away of natural causes. It is impossible to know exactly what prompted Maurer to end his life in this dramatic and tragic manner, but McCausland noted that he had been in ill health and his recent battle with prostate problems likely contributed to his radical decision to end his life.⁴⁰ In addition to whatever health issues Maurer was battling, he was surely distraught over his father's recent passing. This was likely exacerbated by the fact that Louis and Alfred never seem to have resolved their aesthetic

⁴⁰ Prior to his suicide, Maurer had been diagnosed with a benign hypertrophy of the prostate gland. He had a two-stage operation at Beth Israel Hospital in New York—a bilateral vasectomy and suprapubic cystotomy and later had a second stage prostatectomy. According to McCausland, "the postoperative course was uncomplicated. The abdominal incision was slow in healing, because the condition had been of long standing and Maurer's general resistance had been lowered by kidney damage. After his return to 404 West Forty-third Street, Maurer was mentally depressed. Perhaps despite assurances of surgeon and physician, he believed he had cancer. There is a rumor that cannot be checked, that he had tried to take his life earlier." McCausland, *A. H. Maurer: A Biography*, p. 245. Discussing Maurer's suicide, Sheldon Reich stated, "It seems credible that Maurer, depressed by his illness and his lack of sales and shocked by his father's death, had suicide on his mind for some time." Reich, *Alfred H. Maurer, 1868–1932*, p. 117.

differences. Since Louis had condemned Alfred's early modernist endeavors in the teens, when Alfred turned from his more traditional figurative imagery to Fauvism, one can only imagine his horror at Alfred's late work, much of which boldly fused expressionist and abstractionist elements. Louis surely disapproved of his son's late paintings, which veered far from the kind of conservative art he sanctioned. Alfred's suicide may not have been a direct response to unresolved issues with his father, but it was more than likely related to this complicated relationship that would remain forever unresolved. It may well have been that Louis' death completely overwhelmed Alfred rather than freeing him from his father. The official story promulgated by Maurer's family after his suicide was that Alfred took his life because he was positively overcome with remorse for not having reconciled with his father.⁴¹

Whatever the specific reasoning behind Maurer's suicide, it is obvious that much of the work he produced in his last years reflected an inner turmoil. The cause for this turmoil may have been rooted in ill health, poor sales, or conflicted relationships, but regardless of its point of origin, it was palpable in numerous late paintings that seemed to excavate the dark

⁴¹ The official story that was promulgated by Maurer's family was that "Maurer killed himself after learning suddenly of his father's death on July 19; he was overcome with remorse because he had not been reconciled with his father." *Ibid.*, p. 116.

recesses of Maurer's imagination. Distorted pictures such as Cubist Two Heads (c. 1930, fig. 125) is one example of this type of turmoil-filled work in which Maurer merged formal and emotive elements and revealed his true essence as an Expressionist. Maurer was after all, at core, an Expressionist, and as Sheldon Reich perceptively observed in 1973, much of his art paralleled the evolution of modern art in Central Europe, especially in Germany.⁴² Indeed, Maurer's provocative and unconventional abstract expressions, which shocked most audiences, also prophesied future directions in abstraction. The critic Lewis Mumford recognized this when he noted in 1934, two years after Maurer's death, "...of all the painters who developed abstract art during the last twenty years, struggling for new symbols to express new states of mind and feeling, Maurer was one of the handful of genuine moderns who really felt abstractions as experiences."⁴³

Conclusion

Over the course of Alfred Maurer's remarkably varied career, he created penetrating imagery that continually affirmed his significance as an

⁴² Ibid., p. 117.

⁴³ Lewis Mumford, "The Art Galleries: In Memoriam," The New Yorker 10, November 17, 1934: 34-39.

artist of considerable merit and vision. His work, which was rooted in European aesthetics and marked by a distinct “foreignness,” was constantly expanding and challenging traditional ways of understanding the world. Whether it took the form of captivating Whistlerian figure paintings, brilliantly colored Fauve compositions, animated floral depictions, enigmatic, long-necked ladies, semi-abstract, seductively colored still lifes, or intensely distorted heads, Maurer’s art was one of sincere conviction.

During his lifetime, Maurer’s work met with mixed reactions; it was favorably received by some, but often—especially late in the artist’s life—it was criticized by others. Contrary to early accounts of the artist, Maurer was not overlooked by the press during his career and he did not suffer from profound neglect. After his death a wide array of newspapers featured memorial articles devoted to his life and art. In the years that followed, several individuals demonstrated serious interest in his work and actively promoted it. Among the most notable figures passionately committed to the Maurer cause were Hudson D. Walker, Elizabeth McCausland, Sheldon Reich, and Bertha Schaefer.

Hudson Walker was the curator of the University of Minnesota Art Gallery when it was founded in 1934, and later established a gallery in New York City in 1936. He was devoted to the promotion of living artists;

however, he was only introduced to Maurer's work by William Waltemath in 1937, five years after the artist's death. In 1941, Walker purchased the contents of the Maurer estate from the artist's sister, Eugenia Maurer Fuerstenberg, a large portion of which Mr. and Mrs. Hudson Walker formally bequeathed to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, in 1977, now the Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum. Today, this museum has the single largest holding of Maurer's work, 86 paintings and 580 drawings, which form an integral part of the museum's American collection.

Elizabeth McCausland authored the first and only biography on Maurer, an artist whom she referred to in her 1951 publication as "America's first modern painter." McCausland's contributions have greatly informed our understanding of this artist and her research notes and archival documents are invaluable resources for any study on Maurer.⁴⁴ Along with a committee that consisted of Lloyd Goodrich and Herman Moore of the Whitney Museum, Hudson Walker, and D. S. Defenbacher, McCausland organized the first major retrospective exhibition of Maurer's life and work, which originated at the Walker Art Center in 1949 and was later on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. This exhibition also

⁴⁴ McCausland's research notes on deposit at the Archives of American Art are perhaps ultimately more useful than her biography, which often veers off heavily into psychological tangents.

traveled in 1950 and 1951 to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, the Milwaukee Art Institute, the Saint Paul Gallery and School of Art, the San Francisco Museum, the Portland (Oregon) Art Museum, and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

The next significant exhibition devoted to Maurer's work took place in 1973, twenty-two years after the Whitney and Walker show. It was displayed at the National Collection of Fine Arts, now the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and was organized by Adelyn D. Breeskin. Sheldon Reich provided an insightful essay for the catalogue that accompanied this exhibit and introduced Maurer's work to a new generation of scholars and art enthusiasts. His text, which was arranged thematically, served and continues to function as an important compliment to McCausland's 1951 biography on the artist.

Over the years, a small handful of commercial galleries have devoted serious attention to Maurer's work. In the 1950s, the dealer Bertha Schaefer made great strides in bringing his art into further focus. She featured it in important shows at her New York gallery and placed many of the artist's paintings in museum collections around the country. Since her significant efforts, numerous other galleries have sought to highlight Maurer's contributions including the Bernard Danenberg Gallery, Babcock

Galleries, Salander - O'Reilly Galleries, and Hollis Taggart Galleries, all based in New York. As a consequence of the collective efforts of these establishments and the aforementioned individuals, Alfred Maurer's contributions to American and modern art have been brought to wider public attention and we are thus better positioned to reassess his seminal importance within the realm of historical American art developments.

Appendix IExhibition Chronology: 1899-19161899

Annual Exhibition of the American Art Association of Paris.
Paris.

Opened May

Salon de 1899 Exposition Annuelle des Beaux-Arts (117^e
Exposition). Paris, Société des Artistes Français.
#1365 La tireuse de cartes [possibly The Fortune Teller]

Nov. 6–Dec. 17

Twelfth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by
American Artists. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.
#196 The Fortune Teller

1900

Jan. 2-13

Annual Exhibition of the American Art Association of Paris.
Paris, Galeries Durand-Ruel.
The Dancer
Interior

Jan. 15–Feb. 24

Sixty-Ninth Annual Exhibition. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Academy of the Fine Arts.
#316 The Fortune Teller

Apr-Oct

Exposition Universelle, 1900 (Paris Exposition, 1900). Paris.
#207 Portrait [At the Window].

Opened Apr 7

Salon de 1900 Exposition Annuelle des Beaux-Arts (118^e
Exposition). Paris, Société des Artistes Français.
#917 La Châle Rouge [The Red Shawl]

Oct. 30–Dec. 9

Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture
by American Artists. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.
#145 The Red Shawl

Dec. 1-6

Watercolors. New York, Salmagundi Club.
Portrait [Awarded George Inness Jr. prize]

1901

Exhibition of The Country Sketch Club. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.

Twenty-Third Exhibition of the Society of American Artists, New York.
Exhibited three paintings

Jan. 14–Feb. 23 Seventieth Annual Exhibition. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
#22 Portrait [From the Paris Exposition]
#27 An Arrangement
#33 Cafe in Paris

May 1–Nov. 1 Pan-American Exposition. Buffalo, New York.
White Door [awarded bronze medal]

Opened April 4 Allan Gallery. New York
Exhibited two figure paintings. Unclear which other works were shown.

May 18–July 8 Eighth Annual Exhibition of American Art. Eden Park, Cincinnati Museum.

June 3–Oct. 14 Third Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings. Worcester, Massachusetts, Worcester Art Museum.
The French Girl
An Arrangement [awarded first prize]

Oct. 29–Dec. 8 Fourteenth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.
#207 Girl in White

Nov. 7–Jan. 1, 1902 Sixth Annual International Exhibition. Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute.
An Arrangement

1902

Jan. 3–Feb. 1 Seventy-Seventh Annual Exhibition. New York, National Academy of Design.

#103 An Arrangement
 #127 Boulevard Montparnasse, Paris.

- Jan. 20–Mar. 1 Seventy-First Annual Exhibition. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
 #27 The White Door
 #213 Girl in White
 #414 Moth
 #222 An Arrangement
 #464 Le Bal Bullier
- Mar. 28–May 4 Exhibition of the Society of American Artists, New York.
 Exhibited three paintings including The White Door
- May 29–Sept. 15 Fourth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings. Worcester, Massachusetts, Worcester Art Museum.

1903

- Opened Apr. 16 Salon de 1903 (XIII^e Exposition). Paris, Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.
 #904 La danseuse
 #905 Le trottin
 #906 Le paon [The Peacock]
 #907 La dernière danse au Bullier.
 #908 Confection
- Oct. 20–Nov. 25 Sixteenth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.
 #256 Le Trottin
 #257 The Last Dance at Le Bal Bullier
 #258 Confection

1904

- Jan. 25–Mar. 5 Seventy-Third Annual Exhibition. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
 #24 Bal Bullier
 #39 Confection
 #660 Le Trottin

- Opened Apr. 17 Salon de 1904 (XIV^e Exposition). Paris, Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.
 #848 Le coup de brosse
 #849 La nuit
 #850 Le Rendezvous
 #851 chez le coiffeur
 #852 Dans l'escalier
- Apr. 30-Dec. 1 Universal Exposition. St. Louis, Art Palace. Awarded silver medal.
The Seller of Songs
Girl in White
- Oct. 20-Nov. 24 Seventeenth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.
 #280 Brushing Up
 #281 The Rendezvous
 #282 On the Stairway
- Spring Berlin Kantstrasse 12. Secession, IX. Berlin, Kunstaussstellung.
 #150 Die Brotrinde
- Nov. 4-Jan. 1, 1905 Ninth Annual International Exhibition. Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute.
 #178 The Dancer
 #179 A Garden Near Robinson, France
- 1905**
- Internationale Kunstaussstellung. Munich, Crystal Place.
Jeanne [awarded gold medal]
- Exposition Universelle des Beaux-Arts. Belgium.
 #1365 La Danseuse [awarded bronze third-class medal]
- Jan. 23-Mar. 4 One Hundredth Anniversary Exhibition. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
 #238 A Garden Near Robinson, France
 #241 Brushing Up
 #412 On the Stairway
 #465 Mademoiselle Jeanne
 #502 Rendezvous

- Apr. 15-June 30 (XV^e Exposition). Paris, Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.
Exhibited five works including:
#862 Gabrielle
#863 Jeanne
#864 Au Jardin
#865 Au Café
- Oct. 18-Nov. 25 Salon d'Automne. Paris.
#1077 Au Vestiaire
#1078 Bal Bullier
- Oct. 19-Nov. 26 Eighteenth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture
by American Artists. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.
#221 Gabrielle
- Nov. 2-Jan. 1, 1906 Tenth Annual International Exhibition. Pittsburgh, Carnegie
Institute.
#168 The Errand Girl
#169 A Parisian
- 1906**
Spring Ausstellung der Berliner Secession, XIII. Berlin, Schwarz-
Weiss Ausstellungshaus.
Jeanne
- Jan. 22-Mar. 3 Annual Exhibition of American Art at the Pennsylvania
Academy of the Fine Arts. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Academy of the Fine Arts.
- Feb.-Apr. Kunst-Verein. Bremen.
Jeanne
- May 19-July 16 Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of American Art. Eden Park,
Cincinnati Museum.
Gabrielle
- Nov.-Dec. Inaugural Exhibition. Indianapolis, Indiana, John Herron
Institute.
Gabrielle

1907

- Exhibition of Paintings. Paris, American Art Association.
- Spring Ausstellung der Berliner Secession, XIII. Berlin Secession
Ausstellungshaus.
#179 Damenbildnis
- Apr. 14-June 30 XVII^e Exposition. Paris, Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts.
#828 Femme au peignoir
- Oct. 1-22 Salon d'Automne. Paris.
Exhibited six landscapes. #1260-#1265
- Oct. 22-Dec. 1 Twentieth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Sculpture
by American Artists. Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago.
#226 Woman in Dressing Jacket
- Dec-Jan 1908 Annual Exhibition. Indianapolis, Indiana, John Herron
Institute.
#46 Woman in Dressing Jacket

1908

- Paris Society of American Painters. Antwerp, Antwerp
Triennial Exhibition.
#476 Salle de Danse
- Jan. The Work of Six American Artists Residing in Paris. Art
Institute of Chicago; Detroit Museum of Art, Memphis
Society of Fine Arts, May, 1908.
The Apprentice
Girl in Brown Kimono
Night-the Quai
Night-Boulevard St. Michele
Night-Place Monge
Night-Metropolitan
Rue de l'Ancienne Comedie
Montrouge
- Jan. 20-Feb. 29 One Hundred and Third Annual Exhibition. Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

	#246 <u>Woman in Dressing Jacket</u> #311 <u>Une Parisienne</u>
Feb.	Special Exhibition. Paris, American Art Association.
Feb.-Apr.	Vereinigung nordwestdeutscher Künstler. Bremen, Kunsthalle. #202 <u>Mlle. Jeanne</u>
Spring	Ausstellung der Berliner Secession, XV. Berlin, Secession Ausstellungshaus. #174 <u>Stilleben</u>
Apr. 15-June 30	XVIII ^e Exposition. Paris, Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts. #789 <u>Mademoiselle Renée</u> #790 <u>Mademoiselle R...</u>
July-Aug. 8	Allied Artists' Association. London, Royal Albert Hall. #1843 <u>Portrait</u> #1844-1847 <u>Landscape</u>
Oct. 1-Nov. 8	Salon d'Automne. Paris. #1390-1394 <u>Paysage</u> #1395 <u>Nature morte</u>
<u>1909</u>	
Jan.	American Art Association. Paris.
Jan. 31-Mar. 14	One Hundred and Fourth Annual Exhibition. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. #165 <u>The Vrunhard</u>
Feb.	Work of Contemporary American Landscape Painters. New York, National Arts Club. Exhibited 2 landscape paintings.
Mar. 30-Apr. 17	Exhibition of Sketches in Oil by Alfred Maurer, of Paris and New York: And Watercolors by John Marin, of Paris and New York. New York, Photo-Secession Galleries (291). Exhibited fifteen paintings, all listed as sketches in oil.

- Apr. 30-June 30 Twelfth Annual Exhibition of Oil Paintings. Pittsburgh, Carnegie Institute.
Gabrielle
- Oct. 1-Nov. 8 Salon d'Automne. Paris.
#1201-1203 Paysage
#1204 Nature morte
- 1910**
- New York, National Arts Club.
Exhibited two landscape scenes
- Mar. 21-Apr. 15 Younger American Painters. New York, Photo-Secession Galleries ("291").
Garden Scene with Table [possibly The Iron Table]
- Oct. 1-Nov. 8 Salon d'Automne. Paris.
#843 Paysage
#844 Nature morte
- 1911**
- Oct. 1-Nov. 8 Salon d'Automne. Paris.
#1086 Paysage
#1087 Paysage
- Apr. Independents Exhibition. New York, Beaux-Arts Gallery.
Exhibited, six still life paintings of flowers including
The Iron Table
- Devembez Gallery. Paris.
- 1912**
- Spring Berliner Secession Ausstellung, XXVIV. Berlin, Secession Ausstellungshaus.
#160 Landschaft.
- Oct. 1-Nov. 8 Salon d'Automne. Paris.
#1172 Paysage
#1173 Nature morte

1913

Exhibition of the Société Artistique de Picardie Le Touquet.
France.

#116 Paysage

Exhibition of Artistic Colony Étaples, France, 1913.

Le Bal Bullier

Paysage

Jan. 15-29

Solo exhibition: New York, Folsom Galleries.

1. The Vineyard
2. The Begonia
3. The Vegetable Garden
4. Hillside
5. Landscape
6. Tulips
7. Still Life
8. On the Way to Azy
9. Sunken Garden
10. Head
11. The Agate Pitcher
12. Old Faience
13. Border of the Village
14. House and Hills
15. Cherry Tree
16. Fields
17. Landscape
18. Head
19. Still Life
20. Autumn
21. Still Life
22. Under the Trees
23. Head
24. The Poplars
25. The Brook
26. Dahlias
27. Still Life

- Feb. 17-Mar. 15 International Exhibition of Modern Art (Armory Show).
New York, Armory of the Sixty-Ninth Infantry. Traveling
exhibition.
#53. Landscape
#54. Old Faience
#55. Autumn
#1055. Still Life
- May American Artists Club Exhibition. Paris.
Jeanne
Still Life
- Nov. 15-Jan. 5, 1914 Salon d'Automne. Paris.
#1475 Etude
#1476 Etude
#1477 Nature morte
- 1914**
- Feb. 5-Mar. 7 Exhibition of Contemporary Art. New York, National Arts
Club.
Nos. 61-63 Landscape
- Apr 22-May 13 Flower Painting. New York, Charles Daniel Gallery.
- Apr 23-Oct 31 Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Citta di Venezia, XI.
Venice.
#23 Jeanne
- Opened May 1 Anglo-American Exposition. London.
- June 12-July 2 Allied Artists' Association, Ltd. (Seventh year) London,
Holland Park Hall.
#508 Still Life
#509 Head
#510 Still Life
- 1915**
- Jan. 1-May 1 Panama-Pacific International Exposition. San Francisco,
Palace of Fine Arts.
#4396 Jeanne
#4398 Le Bal Bullier

- Oct. 1-26 Works by American Artists. New York, Charles Daniel
Gallery.
Still Life
Summer
- 1916
Mar. 13-25 The Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters. New
York, Anderson Galleries.
Exhibited three still lifes and thirteen landscapes including
In the Vineyard

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