



NATIONAL MUSEUM
of WOMEN in the ARTS

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NEWS RELEASE

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**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS PRESENTS FIRST U.S. EXHIBITION
OF PAINTINGS BY DANISH ARTIST ANNA ANCHER AND THE ART COLONY AT SKAGEN**

A WORLD APART: ANNA ANCHER AND THE SKAGEN ART COLONY

On View February 15 through May 12, 2013

WASHINGTON —The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) presents the first exhibition in the United States to focus on Danish modern painter Anna Ancher (1859–1935) and the artist colony at Skagen, Denmark. *A World Apart: Anna Ancher and the Skagen Art Colony*, features 41 paintings and oil sketches by Ancher and more than 20 by her fellow Skagen artists. The close-knit community of artists in Skagen, Ancher’s native town in northern Denmark’s remote Jutland peninsula, included Anna Ancher’s husband, Michael Ancher, and renowned artists P. S. Krøyer and Laurits Tuxen, among others.

Part of a late-19th-century aesthetic known as the “Modern Breakthrough,” Ancher



and the other Skagen painters moved beyond the neoclassical painting style that prevailed in the Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. Their works were shaped by the Realist, Impressionist, and Symbolist movements that took hold in Europe during the second half of the century. As industrial development began to mark city

life, the Skagen artists were inspired by the area's land, seascape, and culture, which they considered to be a haven from urban living.

An integral figure in their group, Anna Ancher created meditative interior scenes and landscapes, which were singled out by contemporary critics for their deft use of color, lively brushwork, and skilled depiction of northern Denmark's crystalline light. This exhibition is the first opportunity for American audiences to consider Ancher's role in the Skagen colony and her place in the history of art.



A World Apart: Anna Ancher and the Skagen Art Colony is the result of an unprecedented partnership between NMWA and Denmark's Skagens Museum, in collaboration with the Michael and Anna Ancher House in Skagen and with assistance from the Embassy of Denmark, Washington, D.C. Programming for the exhibition is also a featured component of *Nordic Cool 2013* (February 19–March 17, 2013), the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' international arts festival highlighting the diverse cultures of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Greenland, and the Faroe and Åland Islands.

"The Skagens Museum and the Michael and Anna Ancher House have lent their core collections to this exhibition, offering unparalleled access to their very best works, which are so rarely seen outside of Denmark," says NMWA Director Susan Fisher Sterling. "We are pleased to bring Ancher's singular vision to Washington, D.C., once again proving that women artists, even in the remotest of places, contributed vitally to the development of modern art."

Within thematic categories, NMWA's exhibition presents the subjects that most captivated

the Skagen artists. In the section *Land & Sea*, imagery of fishermen launching boats to sea and farmers harvesting grain fields indicates the importance of these elements to the local community—the rustic settings were a primary reason that Skagen appealed to artists. *Family* and *Faces of Skagen* depict members of the artists' families, including Ancher herself and her husband, Michael, as well as the local population.

Ancher's most frequent subject is featured in *Interiors*, a theme that encompasses scenes both with and without figures. Some of Ancher's most striking images are her interiors devoid of human presence, a motif to which she frequently returned. In *Breakthroughs*, a category devoted solely to the work of Anna Ancher, avant-garde elements of her art are considered in a selection of oil studies and painterly images. These works reveal how Ancher continuously experimented with paint to capture light and color, resulting in some of her most innovative pieces.

The full-color, 150-page, softcover exhibition catalogue includes new essays: Mette Bøgh Jensen, Curator, Skagens Museum, writes about the Skagen artists and the colony's development; and Elisabeth Fabritius, Board Member, Helga Ancher Foundation, introduces Anna Ancher, detailing her life and artistic influences.

A World Apart: Anna Ancher and the Skagen Art Colony has been organized by the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., and Skagens Museum, Skagen, Denmark, in cooperation with the Michael and Anna Ancher House, Skagen, Denmark.

The exhibition is made possible by the lead sponsorship of Oak Foundation, Denmark. Additional funding is provided by Queen Margrethe's and Prince Henrik's Foundation, Peter Flinch, and GE Foundation, with support from the Friends of Anna Ancher.

The museum gratefully acknowledges the invaluable assistance of The Danish Embassy in the United States.

PRESS PREVIEW

Press are invited to a preview *A World Apart: Anna Ancher and the Skagen Art Colony* on Wednesday, February 13 at 10 a.m. at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. RSVP to: media@nmwa.org.

ABOUT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS (NMWA)

Founded in 1981 and opened in 1987, NMWA is the only museum solely dedicated to celebrating the achievements of women in the visual, performing and literary arts. The museum's collection features 4,500 works from the 16th century to the present created by more than 1,000 artists; including Mary Cassatt, Frida Kahlo, Alma Thomas, Lee Krasner, Louise Bourgeois, Chakaia Booker, and Nan Goldin along with special collections of 18th-century silver tableware and botanical prints. NMWA is located at 1250 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C., in a landmark building near the White House. It is open Monday–Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday, noon–5 p.m. For information, call 202-783-5000 or visit www.nmwa.org. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for visitors 65 and over and students, and free for NMWA Members and youth 18 and under.

For more information about NMWA, visit www.nmwa.org, [Broad Strokes Blog](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

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Image credits:

Anna Ancher, *Sunlight in the blue room*, 1891; Oil on canvas, 25 5/8 x 23 1/8 in.; Skagens Museum, Inv. 1206

Michael Ancher, *Anna Ancher returning from the field*, 1902; Oil on canvas, 73 5/8 x 38 3/4 in.; Skagens Museum, Inv. 1093

All images courtesy of Skagens Museum and Michael and Anna Ancher's House.