

Detail from Oyster House

# ADELAIDE NEWHALL: REMEMBER THAT ALL PAINTING IS SEEING, NOT DOING

September 15–November 26, 2023

Curated by Richard Neal and Robert Finger



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# ADELAIDE NEWHALL

*"Remember that all painting is seeing, not doing. A painter spends his life in despair trying to paint the beauty he sees—in so doing he approaches more beauty. Knowledge will come to you unknowingly. Think of what beauty is revealed to you; try to put that down."*

—Charles Hawthorne

*Thank you to this exhibition's sponsors, Jack Krumholz and Marjorie Jacoby.*

In the early 1900s, Adelaide May Newhall (1884–1960) came to Cape Cod with her parents to enjoy the ocean air at a cottage rented from Edwin Cook near what is now called Lecount Hollow. Imagine her exhilaration when she disembarked from the train to the platform of the South Wellfleet station: the stark expanses of sandy dunes, simple structures, and rough sea must have presented such a contrast to the wide plazas, giant factories, and bustling streets of her hometown of Worcester, Massachusetts. As with so many who visit the Outer Cape, young Adelaide yearned for more time in such a beautiful place. At 33 years old, professional and quite an independent thinker, she bought one of Cook's cottages, which she moved a few decades later to a safer location on the dunes above the Atlantic surf, accessed by a dirt path off Ocean View Drive.

After graduating from Smith College and teaching at private schools for several years, Newhall had moved to Montclair, New Jersey to live with her parents and begin a career teaching Latin at Montclair High. She would travel to her cottage on the Cape during school summer vacations, always with a mind to paint the raw beauty of her surroundings. Her passion for art had developed at a young age as





Detail from *Mudhead*

she filled notebooks with sketches of the people and places around her, and this was the driver for many of her plans and activities. She would drive or travel by train to study with Charles Hawthorne and other art teachers who offered classes in the burgeoning art colony of Provincetown.

Hawthorne's insistence on developing the skill to mix and apply spots of color onto a board to create an image of natural reality is a trait that can be seen throughout Newhall's work. In one of Hawthorne's introductory exercises, students were instructed to use only a putty knife to apply pigment. An early "mudhead" painting of Newhall's, included in this show, is evidence of that exercise. Much of her work involves adept use of a more refined relative to the putty knife, the artist's palette knife, and exhibits an advanced understanding of planar and tonal construction using that tool.

Not many of Newhall's portraits survived in good condition, but those that do show an influence of another teacher, Jerry Farnsworth, who echoed Hawthorne when he said, "Likeness is a funny thing—if you disregard it and take pieces of color and fit them together as in a jigsaw puzzle, when you are done you will have a likeness."

Another quote from Farnsworth shows an ethos shared by Newhall: "People say I am too deadly serious about my painting. I am serious about it. I feel it is a great privilege to be a painter...."

# ADELAIDE NEWHALL



Detail from *Near Santiago*

Newhall's sister, Carrie, traveled to many parts of Central and South America with her husband, a mining engineer. Several small paintings are marked "Santiago-1926," the year Newhall visited Chile to be present for the birth of Carrie's daughter. Travel for Newhall was an opportunity to paint. South America yielded the thin, pale color of mountain air. Visits to Panama resulted in lush, dense tropical compositions. During the school year, Newhall would paint the bare trees and snow-covered streets of Montclair, or load art supplies into the trunk of her black Mercury to find a rural New Jersey cornfield.

Newhall was always looking for opportunities to not only create paintings but to exhibit her work. She made connections with art leagues and associations while entering her work into prominent juried shows, including many venues throughout New Jersey, and at the Cape

Cod Art Association and Provincetown Art Association and Museum. She mounted many one-person exhibitions, most notably at the Suburban Gallery of East Orange, New Jersey and at the Crespi Gallery in Manhattan. Still busy preparing for several one-person exhibits, she died in 1960 at age 76.

The paintings she made on Cape Cod are among her very best, combining a clear-eyed view of her subject matter with a sophisticated, architectural understanding of the picture plane.

"...my music and artwork have been a most welcome retreat and stimulation...during our delightful summers on Cape Cod, where we live the simple life, and where I have time to do all the things I love to do...read, swim, paint, tramp, play tennis, and enjoy life to the full."  
—Adelaide Newhall

*Curated by Richard Neal and Robert Finger,  
September 2023*

## ARTWORK LIST

*At the Foot of Uncle Tim's Bridge*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Robert Finger and Robert Remer

*August Morning*, n.d.  
Oil on masonite  
Collection of Carolyn and Tom Warman

*Blackfish Creek*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Boat Houses*, n.d.  
Oil on masonite  
Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Boats Ashore*, n.d.  
Oil on masonite  
Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Boatyard*, n.d.  
Oil on canvas on board  
Collection of Robert Finger and Robert Remer

*Caldwell Cornfield*, 1947  
Oil on board  
Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Cape Cod Dune*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Cindy and Alan Rossman

*Dunes*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Carolyn and Tom Warman

*Ebb Tide*, n.d.  
Oil on canvas on board  
Collection of Robert Finger and Robert Remer

*Embassy Hill*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Carolyn and Tom Warman

*Gloucester*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Cindy and Alan Rossman

*Higgins Wharf*, n.d.  
Oil on masonite  
Collection of Carolyn and Tom Warman

*In Port*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
PAAM Permanent Collection, Gift of Richard Neal, 1994

*Montclair Afternoon*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Robert Finger and Robert Remer

*Morning Sun, Wellfleet*, n.d.  
Oil on canvas on board  
Collection of Robert Finger and Robert Remer

*Mudhead*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Near Santiago*, 1926  
Oil on board  
Collection of Diana and George Martell

*Newhall Cottage Interior*, n.d.  
Oil on masonite  
Collection of Carolyn and Tom Warman

*Oyster House*, c. 1940s  
Oil on board  
PAAM Permanent Collection, Gift of Richard Neal, 2015

*Provincetown Bather*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Provincetown Lane*, n.d.  
Oil on board  
Collection of Carolyn and Tom Warman

# ADELAIDE NEWHALL

*September Sunlight*, n.d.

Oil on board

Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Slack Tide*, n.d.

Oil on canvas

Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Still Life with Lemon*, n.d.

Oil on board

Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Stone Hopper*, n.d.

Oil on board

Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Tropical Sunshine*, n.d.

Oil on canvas on board

Collection of Robert Finger and Robert Remer

*Winter Light*, n.d.

Oil on board

Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Woman in Red*, n.d.

Oil on board

Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

*Woman in White*, n.d.

Oil on board

Collection of Robert Finger and Robert Remer

*Woman with Auburn Hair*, n.d.

Oil on board

Collection of Richard Neal and Jeanne Norris-Neal

## IN CASES:

Artist's sketchbooks, studies, palette and paint tools

Adelaide Newhall's application for travel to Chile, May 1926

Painting of a mountain scene in Chile, August 1926

*Cape Cod Moors* by Adelaide Newhall, submitted to the 1914 Smith College Alumnae Art Exhibition

Detail from *Cape Cod Dune*



Detail from *Newhall Cottage Interior*