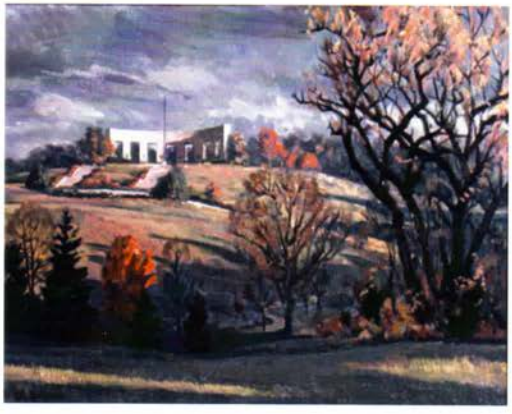
GALLERY
1516
LEAVENWORTH

Plein Air Artists

KINGMAN – DUNBIER - GILDER









Eugene Kingman, Memorial Park
Robert F. Gilder, Mormon Hollow

Augustus W. Dunbier, Winter's Onset
Eugene Kingman, Corn Country #2 (Nebraska)

August 24th – October 13th 2019

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Special Thanks:
Mixie Kingman Eddy
Elizabeth Anne Kingman
Sherman Eddy
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Friends of Gallery 1516
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Special Thanks also:
Mary Lou and Mark Brasee
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Janet Strauss
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Museum of Nebraska Art, Kearney
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Plein Air Artists

KINGMAN – DUNBIER - GILDER

Painting *en plein air,* or working in the "open air" directly from nature, was first popularized in nineteenth-century France. Artists began to reject idealized depictions of landscapes in favor of naturalistic observations that captured the mood and atmosphere of the time and place. This desire to reproduce the transient beauty of the natural world was the focus of three twentieth-century Nebraska artists: Eugene Kingman, Augustus W. Dunbier, and Robert F. Gilder.

The three artists traveled extensively throughout the United States and Europe, painting the local prairies, forests, deserts, and bodies of water they encountered. Accompanied by portable paint boxes, Dunbier and Gilder often traversed the woods of Fontenelle Forest as they sought picturesque places to paint. Dunbier also passed on the importance of painting *en plein air* to his students, saying: "If you can't paint it with all of this hanging out there at the end of your nose, how do you expect to do it better back in your basement?" Likewise, Kingman always traveled with his paint brushes and a pallet at hand, ready to capture the beauty of the landscape at a moment's notice.

Kingman, Dunbier, and Gilder left Nebraska a powerful legacy through both their artistic work and community outreach. All had lifelong interests in the sciences and enjoyed successful careers in journalism, education, museum direction, and archaeology but each held a special passion for *plein air* painting. Each had an undeniable ability to translate the sights and emotions of the landscape through a combination of careful observation and artistic intuition. Brought together for the first time, the artwork of Kingman, Dunbier, and Gilder encapsulates the vibrant immediacy of *plein air* landscape painting.

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Eugene Kingman
(1909 – 1975)

Born in Rhode Island in 1909, Eugene Kingman was a prolific artist known for his landscapes, murals, and *plein air* paintings. Kingman was interested in both art and science from an early age, later earning degrees in Geology and Fine Arts from Yale University. While still a student, Kingman received a commission from the National Parks Service to paint scenes of seven national parks for the 1931 Paris Exposition in France. This earned him national recognition, and the paintings are currently held in the collections of the Department of the Interior, the National Park Service in Washington D.C., and the national parks themselves.

After graduating from Yale, Kingman began teaching lithography and mural painting at the Rhode Island School of Design. He began to make a name for himself as a Regionalist artist during the New Deal era, receiving a commission to create murals for three US Post Offices in Rhode Island, Maryland, and Wyoming. In addition, he was commissioned to illustrate thirteen landscapes of Crater Lake and Yosemite National Park for an article published in National Geographic Magazine in 1937. Following his marriage in 1939 to park ranger Elizabeth Yelm, Kingman moved to Oklahoma and became the Director of the Philbrook Art Museum in Tulsa. In 1942, Kingman joined the Army to serve as a cartographer for the Office of Strategic Services during World War II.



New Hampshire Countryside, 1957

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Untitled Country Scene

After the war ended, Kingman moved to Omaha to become the Director of the Joslyn Art Museum where he served for twenty-two years. During his time in Omaha, Kingman strove to promote the arts throughout the city and state, earning him numerous civic awards and other recognitions, including an Honorary Doctorate from Creighton University. While working at the Joslyn Art Museum, Kingman was a lecturer of art at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and was often asked to design and consult on various exhibitions across the country.

Kingman later moved to Lubbock, Texas where he served as Interim Director and Special Exhibit Design Consultant at the Museum of Texas Tech University. Following his death in 1975, the Joslyn Art Museum borrowed Kingman's paintings from collections around the United States and displayed them in the galleries as a memorial tribute. One of the galleries was permanently named the "Kingman Gallery" to honor Eugene Kingman's legacy and contribution to the arts.

"Art should not be isolated from everyday living experience. The ability to create - the need to express ideas, emotions, and perceptions - is part of being human, and is related to everything we do." – Eugene Kingman, 1970

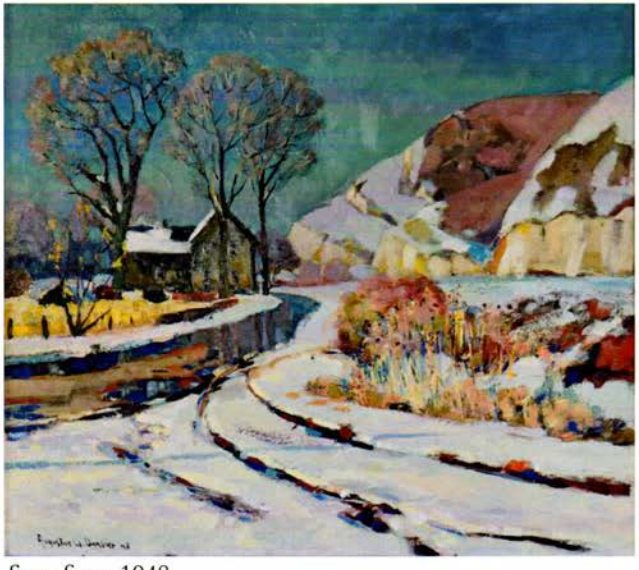
For more information and photos regarding Kingman's artistic legacy, please visit his website: http://eugenekingman.com.

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Augustus W. Dunbier
(1888 – 1977)

Augustus Dunbier was born on a pioneer farm in Polk County Nebraska to German immigrants. In 1907, his family relocated to Germany and Dunbier was accepted into the Royal Academy at Dusseldorf. Dunbier studied at the academy for the next seven years, during which time he befriended the future German Surrealist, Max Ernst. At the beginning of WWI, Dunbier opted to leave Germany and enrolled for a term at the Art Institute of Chicago. Returning to Omaha in 1919, Dunbier developed a relationship with Robert Gilder, whom he considered a mentor and friend. The two spent many hours walking outdoors and painting landscapes.

Although Dunbier maintained a studio in Omaha throughout his life, much of his time was spent traveling. On the east coast, Dunbier socialized and painted with artists such as Robert Spencer and members of the Ashcan School, including Robert Henri, George Bellows, and George Luks. Dunbier also visited Alaska and the Pacific Northwest and was the first Nebraska artist to paint regularly in the Southwest.



Snow Scene, 1948



Cabin Scene

Dunbier never referred to himself as an Impressionist painter, however, most of his landscapes were painted *en plein air* with vivid brushstrokes, and he never took more than a few hours for each work. He scorned the use of photographs and rarely relied on the aid of sketches. He said: "I paint all kinds of abstractions . . . I don't paint trees and grass alone. I paint mood and feeling. I paint sunshine burning into your back. Or the time of day. Or falling shadows. Or the feeling of bitter cold in the winter." Dunbier referred to Modernist art as "screwball art," and was appalled when fellow Omaha artist J. Laurie Wallace noted that Dunbier was a kind of modernist "for impressionistic techniques that went beyond the pale."

In addition to painting, Dunbier taught hundreds of students throughout the state of Nebraska. His instruction was sought after throughout the area, and he taught classes at the YMCA, the Jewish Community Center, the Joslyn Art Museum, and even some from his home studio. His most popular classes painted *en plein air*. Only a small number of students were admitted to study with Dunbier each year. He insisted that his students were never done learning, and as a result many of them returned year after year. Dunbier also traveled outside of Omaha, conducting workshops in Norfolk, Grand Island, North Platte, McCook, Broken Bow, Chadron, Kearney, and Fremont.

After his son's admission to the University of Oxford in the 1950s, Dunbier and his wife traveled abroad to Europe. Dunbier took advantage of the European landscapes before returning to the United States where he split his time between Arizona and Nebraska. His art successfully sold in galleries throughout the Southwest, but it was always Omaha that called him home. Dunbier died in 1977 at age 89 and is buried at West Lawn Cemetery in Omaha.

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Robert F. Gilder
(1856 – 1940)

Throughout his life Robert F. Gilder was known for his many occupations, including journalist, archeologist, and artist. Gilder was born in New York City in 1856, and from an early age was exposed to art and literature. As a young man Gilder received formal training as a painter and worked as a correspondent for a New York newspaper. However, Gilder became estranged from his family and resettled in Nebraska for a fresh start in 1887. Using the skills he learned in New York, Gilder worked for several Omaha newspapers before accepting a position at the Omaha World Herald. There Gilder worked mostly in the evenings and nights, which allowed him to pursue his two hobbies of painting and archeology during the daytime.

Gilder often traversed the woods among the bluffs of the Missouri River to find places to paint *en plein air*. It was during these trips he became interested in archeology and excavated many Native American artifacts. Like many early archeologists Gilder was not formally trained, but his work led him to an important archeological discovery in the state of Nebraska. In 1906, Gilder discovered several skeletons, named the "Nebraska Loess Man" in an earth mound several miles north of Florence. Gilder hypothesized that the remains of the Nebraska Loess Man were that of Neanderthals, although it is likely the bones are not as old as Gilder first proposed. Due to his work in the field, Gilder served as an archeologist for the University of Nebraska State Museum for 12 years and was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Science from the University of Nebraska.



Close of Day on the Missouri

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Nebraska Sunshine

In 1916, Gilder built a cabin and studio in Fontenelle Forest, south of Omaha. He called his home "Wake Robin" after a John Burroughs book on bird watching. Both Wake Robin and the woods outside of his home became frequent subject matter for his art. Gilder was often joined by his friend Augustus Dunbier and the pair painted many of the same scenes together. Three years later, Gilder began to make frequent trips to the Southwest, again often accompanied by Dunbier. While they both painted the desert landscapes, Gilder continued his archeological work and discovered several pueblo ruins in southern Arizona.

For his 77th birthday, Gilder was interviewed by the Omaha World Herald from his home at Wake Robin. When asked about his career as a painter, Gilder humbly refused to acknowledge his accomplishments or name the number of paintings he created over the years. Instead, he insisted that the best was yet to come: "See that tree over there? I've painted that oak no less than 15 times and I'm going to do it again within a few days. I've seen it in all seasons for many years, but never with such color as is creeping into it now . . . when a man is only 77 – life has such color."

Gilder died of pneumonia in 1940 at the age of 83. He is buried in Bellevue Cemetery. In the 1960s, two schools in the Bellevue area were named after the artist, including Wake Robin Elementary and Robert Gilder Elementary School. His work resides in the permanent collections of the Museum of Nebraska Art in Kearney and the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha.

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Selected Accomplishments

Eugene Kingman

1929 50th Anniversary Prize in Painting – Providence Art Club; Providence, RI
1931 Seven paintings for National Park Service, sent to Paris Exposition, France
1932 Four paintings commissioned for Glacier National Park Museum
1937 Mural for Post Office; Hyattsville, MD
1938 Mural for Post Office; Kemmerer, WY
1939 Mural for Post Office; East Providence, RI
1940 First Prize for Graphics – 39th Annual Exhibition, Isaac Delgado Museum of Art; New Orleans, LA
1940 First Prize for Graphics – Oklahoma Artists Annual; Oklahoma City, OK
1948 Mural in New York Times Building, Times Square; New York, NY
1952 Second Prize in Painting - Associated Artists of Omaha; Omaha, NE
1956 Third Prize, Oil Painting – New Haven Railroad Competition; New York, NY
1957 First Prize, Oil Painting – Providence Art Club; Providence, RI
1968 Six Paintings of the Missouri River Mainstem Dams commissioned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Omaha District
1970 Paintings and sketches commissioned by the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior; Washington, D.C.
1972 Citation Award for Painting – Lubbock Art Association, Region 20, Texas Fine Arts Association
1973 Best-in-Show Award and Top Purchase Prize – 62nd National Annual, Texas Fine Arts Association; Austin, TX
1974 Jurors' Choice Award – 19th Annual State Citation Show, Texas Fine Arts Association; Austin, TX
1974 First Prize – Artists' Gala, Lubbock Art Association; Lubbock, TX

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Augustus W. Dunbier

1907 Enters Royal Academy of Fine Art; Dusseldorf, Germany
1925 Exhibits Portrait of "Edith;" Pennsylvania Academy, PA
1925 Enters first Salmagundi Club Exhibit in New York City, NY
1928 Enters San Antonio Art League Competition, TX
1976 Artists Retrospective; College of Saint Mary, Omaha

Posthumous Retrospective Exhibits
1994 Museum of Nebraska Art, Kearney
1999 Mission San Juan Capistrano, CA
2000 VanVechten Lineberry Taos Art Museum, Taos, NM
2001 Phippen Museum, Prescott, AZ
2001 Panhandle Plains Museum, Canyon, TX
2001 Museum of Nebraska Art, Kearney

Robert F. Gilder

1911 Second Annual Exhibition of Omaha Society of Fine Arts; Omaha Public Library
1912 Omaha Art Guild Show; Douglas County Courthouse
1913 "Made in Nebraska" Ancient Archeology Exhibit
1916 Second Annual Exhibition of Northwestern Artists; St. Paul, MN
1917 Gilder Landscape Exhibition; Whitmore Gallery, Omaha
1917 Third Annual Exhibition of Northwestern Artists; St. Paul, MN
1920 Gilder Landscape Exhibition; Whitmore Gallery, Omaha
1921 Nebraska Artists; Omaha Public Library

Gallery 1516 is dedicated to the celebration of Nebraska art and artists. We recognize the importance of the arts to the cultural life of the community and provide a venue for the exhibition of works of Nebraska and regional artists. In addition, we work in conjunction with museums, educational, professional and performing arts organizations to provide a venue in eastern Nebraska for traveling exhibitions, educational lectures, music performances and more.

See more at www.gallery1516.org

Special Thanks to:

Mixie Kingman Eddy, Elizabeth Anne Kingman,
Sherman Eddy, and Quinlan Kingman Eddy
Lonnie Pierson Dunbier
Mary Lou and Mark Brasee
Robyn and Robert Freeman
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1516 LEAVENWORTH STREET OMAHA, NEBRASKA