Gifford Beal and his older brother, Reynolds, were marginal figures in the Independent Movement. A former Henri student, Gifford was more closely involved with Henri's circle than his brother. He was invited to exhibit in the Armory Show; though two of his works were catalogued, records show they were not received for the exhibition. The Beals exhibited extensively at the National Academy. Gifford joined The New Society of Artists and showed in the last MacDowell Club exhibition along with his brother. Each shared a common interest in circus themes, producing lively images, such as *The Circus, New York* that spotlights circus acts, the performers, and the surrounding environment.

Gifford Beal favored picturesque landscapes and views of the upper classes. His work lacked the inherent social consciousness of other Ashcan artists. Notable qualities in his earlier efforts include strong coloration and a style that evokes aspects of Bellows' Maine subjects, and Sloan's Gloucester scenes.


Both Rockwell Kent and Walt Kuhn were intricately linked to the later phase of the Independent Movement. Kent was initially allied with the younger artists who studied with Henri. After the 1910 Exhibition of Independent Artists, he helped plan a subsequent independent show for 1911. For this exhibition, he wanted to adopt a more radical stance that barred the independent exhibition participants from showing at the National Academy. This policy divided the group into two separate factions.

Arthur B. Davies backed Kent; Henri, Sloan, and Bellows were opposed. Kent proceeded, but it was boycotted by a number of key progressive artists. The show became known as the "Independent Exhibition of the Paintings and Drawings of Twelve Men." Though he sought to break from Henri's domination, Kent periodically showed with Henri and the realists.

At times, various members of his circle vented bouts of resentment toward Henri, due to his strong character and his lead position in the artistic forefront. Sloan, Kent, Davies, and Walt Kuhn periodically felt overshadowed by the public attention Henri cultivated and received.

Around 1910, Kuhn's friendship with Davies quickened, due in part to their shared agenda promoting art of the European avant-garde. As the principal organizers of the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art, they represented a strong force within the Association of American Painters and Sculptors. Although Kuhn worked actively with Henri to ensure the 1910 Independent Exhibition's success, his growing determination to usurp Henri's position of influence split the Independent Movement even as plans for the Armory Show began to crystallize. As early as December of 1911, Kuhn referred to eliminating Henri from preliminary plans for a new society; it later evolved into the Association of American Painters and Sculptors.

Kuhn's role in this compelling event is clear; his artistic position is less so. Trained abroad, he embraced the European moderns and a multiplicity of stylistic approach. He more readily than many of his American colleagues. Nonetheless, his own vision narrowed, choosing to concentrate on portraits, though he also produced a number of still lifes. By the 1920s, Kuhn focused on painting entertainers, predominately jugglers, clowns, acrobats, musicians, and showgirls. His portraits wield piercing psychological intensity viewed straight-on, executed in a blunt, direct manner, with flattened space and the simplistic backgrounds illustrated by *Golden and Blue Bolero*. Kuhn's work represents realism's final cadence, the last juncture of realism and modernism, before the modernists swept representational art aside, leaving Henri and the Ashcan School aside.

Though some urban realist scenes initially elicited strong critical reaction, work produced by "progressive artists" was not
nearly as radical as much of the modern art displayed at Alfred Stieglitz's Gallery 291 as early as 1907. Henri's New York realists dominated progressive art from about 1904 until the 1913 Armory Show. There in one single event, those who shared Henri's artistic approach were relegated to the sidelines by the more advanced styles that came to dominate the American avant-garde. However, a number of artists associated with the progressive movement -- including Sloan, Shinn, Hopper, Du Bois, Beal, Kent, Speicher, and Kroll -- remained committed to realism and employed it well into the mid-twentieth century, independent in their vision to the end.

Notes:
1 The sobriquet "the Ashcan School" was most likely introduced in the 1930s by Holger Cahill and Alfred H. Barr. The term was used to characterize the work of the urban realists. See: Holger Cahill and Alfred H. Barr, Jr., Art in America: A Complete Survey (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1934), p. 91. Also see: Rebecca Zurier, et al., Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of American Art, 1995).
7 Henri's Record Book and diary, Estate of Robert Henri, collection of Janet Le Clair. Diary notes are from March 1926. The diary is available on microfilm through the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, roll 886, frames 846-847. Henri did major reworking of the facial features on April 20, and April 22, 1921, and then noted that the work was totally repainted with a different palette on February 26, 1922. The extensive repainting may have contributed to the model's older appearance in the final painting.
8 See James Kraft and Helen Farr Sloan, John Sloan in Santa Fe, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981) for a more in-depth view of Sloan's time in Santa Fe.
9 Jerome Myers, Artist in Manhattan (New York: American Artists Group, 1940), p.35.
10 Glackens painted Central Park in a number of works including: Central Park; Winter, c. 1906 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), and the more similar May Day, Central Park, c. 1905 (The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco). Prendergast's numerous scenes of Central Park include the watercolors Central Park, c. 1900-03 (Blanden Memorial Art Museum, Fort Dodge, Iowa); Picnic, May Day, Central Park, c. 1901 (The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh); May Day, Central Park, c. 1900-03 (Whitney Museum of American Art), and May Day, Central Park, 1901 (The Cleveland Museum of Art).

About the author:
Valerie Ann Leeds is Adjunct Curator of American Art at the Flint Institute of Arts, Michigan. She earned her Ph.D. from the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Prior to her current position, she was Curator of American Art at the Orlando Museum of Art, and also held curatorial positions at the Tampa Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art. She is an expert on the work of Robert Henri and The Eight, and has organized numerous exhibitions,
lectured, and written, on a variety of topics in American Art and photography.

Resource Library editor's note:
The above article was reprinted, without illustrations, in Resource Library on August 22, 2005 with the permission of the author. If you have questions or comments regarding the article, please contact Valerie Ann Leeds directly at the Flint Institute of Arts through either this phone number or address:

- 810-234-1695
- http://www.flintarts.org

This article was previously published in American Art Review, Volume VIII, Number 2, April - May, 1996, pp. 96-107, 159-160. It is an adaptation of the catalogue essay published in connection with the exhibit The Independents: The Ashcan School & Their Circle from Florida Collections held in 1996 at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College.

Resource Library wishes to extend appreciation to Ms. Gail Curry of Flint Institute of Arts for help in contacting Dr. Leeds. RL readers may also enjoy these articles and essays on

George Bellows:
- Leaving for the Country: George Bellows at Woodstock (10/2/03)
- George Bellows: The Tragedies of War (8/9/03)
- George Bellows in Newport and Beyond (5/24/00)
- The Woodstock Art Colony (6/15/99)
- George Bellows: The War Series (1/16/99)
- An American Pulse: The Lithographs of George Wesley Bellows (1/99)
- George Bellows: Love of Winter (12/6/97)

Arthur Davies:
- Arthur B. Davies: Dweller on the Threshold; essay by Randall Suffolk (6/22/01)

William Glackens:
- William J. Glackens, Painter: A Tribute to C. Richard Hilker, Patron; article by Dean Porter (8/24/01)

Robert Henri:
- Robert Henri and the 1915 San Diego Exposition; essay by Jean Stern (1/27/05)
- Robert Henri and His Influence (11/19/02)
- Robert Henri and His Influence: From the Permanent Collection of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery (8/21/02)
- Robert Henri and His Influence, from the Permanent Collection of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden (5/20/02)
- San Diego Beginnings, essay by Martin E. Petersen (7/6/01)
- Robert Henri: American Icon; essay by Valerie Ann Leeds (5/11/01)
- Robert Henri: The Early Years; essay by Bennard Perlman (5/10/01)
- Robert Henri and His Circle: Selections from the Permanent Collection (1/17/99)

and this video:
- Robert Henri and the Art Spirit, is a 1990 28-minute video from EPN.

Rockwell Kent
- In Review: The Prints of Rockwell Kent: A Catalogue Raisonné, essay by Scott R. Ferris (8/18/05)
- Rockwell Kent: The Mythic and the Modern (4/4/05)
- An Eye for Maine: Paintings from a Private Collection; essay by Donelson Hooopes (11/30/04)
- Seeing Red: Rockwell Kent and the Farnsworth Art Museum; article by Victoria K. Woodhull (9/3/04)
- Generations: The Artistic Heritage of Rockwell Kent, essay by Scott R. Ferris (11/18/02)
- Distant Shores: The Odyssey of Rockwell Kent (5/26/00)
- The View from Asgaard; Rockwell Kent's Adirondack Legacy (4/9/99) revised (1/19/00)
- One Hundred Years of Maine at Work

Walt Kuhn:
- Walt Kuhn: An Imaginary History of the West (11/6/99)
George Luks

- George Luks: An Artistic Legacy; essay by Judith Hansen O'Toole (4/19/01)

Maurice Prendergast:

- Maurice Brazil Prendergast. 1853-1324. Merry-Go-Round, Nahant, around 1900-1901: essay by Carol Clark (2/4/02)

John Sloan:

- The Gist of Drawings: Works on Paper by John Sloan (11/3/00)

Eugene Speicher:

- Eugene Speicher: An Artist Reconsidered (9/22/03)

the Ashcan School and The Eight

- Old New York and Artists of the Period: 1900-1941; essays by Constance Schwartz and Franklin Hill Perrell (7/19/01)
- Pride in Place: Landscapes by The Eight in Southern Collections (8/4/00)
- Pride in Place: Landscapes by The Eight in Southern Collections (6/17/00)
- Pride in Place: Landscapes by The Eight in Southern Collections (3/31/00)
- Pride in Place: Landscapes by The Eight in Southern Collections (1/16/00)

from the Smithsonian American Art Museum:

- Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York

from the University of Virginia American Studies Program:

- The Virtual Armory Show

from the WGBH/Boston Forum Network:

☐ The WGBH/Boston Forum Network includes a number of videos on Art and Architecture. Partners include a number of Boston-area museums, colleges, universities and other cultural organizations. Boston Athenaeum partnered with the Forum Network for a series of lectures on American art by David Dearinger, who is Susan Morse Hilles Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Boston Athenaeum. An art historian and curator, he received his Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, with a specialty in nineteenth-century American art. Lectures include The Academy and Art in America, a lecture about the role of the formal art academy in the development of American art and art criticism. [March 24, 2005]

and this book:


Links to sources of information outside of our web site are provided only as referrals for your further consideration. Please use due diligence in judging the quality of information contained in these and all other web sites. Information from linked sources may be inaccurate or out of date. TFAO neither recommends or endorses these referenced organizations. Although TFAO includes links to other web sites, it takes no responsibility for the content or information contained on those other sites, nor exerts any editorial or other control over them. For more information on evaluating web pages see TFAO's General Resources section in Online Resources for Collectors and Students of Art History.

Go to page 1 / 2 / 3 / 4

This is page 4

Visit the Table of Contents for Resource Library for thousands of articles and essays on American art.

Copyright 2005 Traditional Fine Arts Organization, Inc., an Arizona nonprofit corporation. All rights reserved.