

MAURICE PRENDERGAST: PAINTINGS OF AMERICA,

Featuring important works never previously exhibited,
to be shown at Adelson Galleries, Inc., in Spring 2003

Exquisite watercolors and oils celebrate the country and city landscapes of America

Maurice Prendergast: Paintings of America, an exhibition of more than 50 important watercolor and oil paintings, will be shown at Adelson Galleries, Inc., in New York City from May 16-June 20, 2003. Of the works to be displayed by this pioneering modernist painter, many have never before or rarely been available for public viewing while others are among the artist's best-known paintings.

Adelson Galleries, which has made significant contributions to the study of American art through critically acclaimed loan exhibitions and accompanying publications, including ***From the Artist's Studio: Unknown Prints and Drawings by Mary Cassatt*** (2000), ***Childe Hassam: An American Impressionist*** (1999) and ***Sargent Abroad*** (1997), has gathered for ***Maurice Prendergast: Paintings of America*** a group of outstanding works that will offer a once-in-a-lifetime viewing opportunity. Commitments to lend paintings for this exhibition have already been secured from some of the country's most important private collectors, among them Raymond and Margaret Horowitz, as well as an array of major institutions, including The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

Warren Adelson, president of Adelson Galleries, has a long-standing commitment to the works of Maurice Prendergast (as well as to those of many of the artist's contemporaries), having organized two previous Prendergast exhibitions at Coe Kerr Gallery in New York City: ***The Remembered Image: Prendergast Watercolors 1896-1906*** in 1986, and ***The Unknown Pastels, Maurice Brazil Prendergast*** in 1987. His dedication to the artist's work led to a professional association with Eugénie Prendergast, widow of Maurice's brother Charles (a gifted craftsman and artist in his own right), and heir to the Prendergast estate. "I have wanted to revisit the works of Maurice Prendergast," Adelson said, "and to organize an exhibition about the artist's American perspective. I hope it will offer new insights into this rare and original talent."

Maurice Brazil Prendergast (1858-1924) was born in Newfoundland, Canada, to a shopkeeper who moved his family to Boston in 1868. He left school at an early age, eventually going to work for a commercial art firm. From 1891-1894 he studied and worked in France, developing a modern style that drew upon the bright colors and lively patterns of the Post-Impressionists. He also began to make monotype prints, establishing himself as one of the most gifted graphic artists in American history. By the turn of the century, the Boston-based Prendergast had attracted support from critics and patrons, including Sarah Choate Sears, who financed an important trip to Italy in 1898-1899. After 1900, he added New York City parks and streets to his repertoire of New England subjects. He visited France again in 1907, where he was profoundly influenced by Cézanne and Matisse, and began to move his style in a more abstract direction. In 1908 he exhibited with The Eight, a group of independent-minded New York artists, and in 1913 he participated in the controversial Armory Show. After 1914 Prendergast lived in New York, spending summers in New England. He continued to enjoy critical and commercial success before succumbing to illness in 1924.

Maurice Prendergast: Paintings of America will be the first exhibition to focus specifically on the artist's paintings inspired by this country, from early images of Boston-area esplanades and New York's Central Park to later idyllic landscapes and New England townscapes. The show will be visually stunning, for it features some of the most beautiful works of the artist's career. Among them are a joyous watercolor of children riding a merry-go-round; a scene of ladies carrying red parasols as they walk atop the rocks at Nantasket Beach; and a tapestry-like oil of women standing under fruit trees that combines elements of the artist's shore imagery with motifs drawn from early Italian Renaissance paintings. In addition to offering an enjoyable visual spectacle, the show will illustrate how the artist integrated the American landscape and its history with European aesthetic traditions and innovations throughout his career. Many of Prendergast's first mature paintings of this country depict recreational spots that had been recently opened or renovated to promote good health, especially in city-dwelling immigrants and their children. His scenes of South Boston Pier or New York's East River Park, for instance, capture not only the pleasures of outdoor leisure but also spaces where social reformers hoped children and immigrants would learn their first lessons in democracy and become assimilated into American society. Later, as his aesthetic changed and the national mood shifted, Prendergast's pictures grew less specific and more idealized, yet remained rooted in the American landscape. Through the exhibition viewers will be able to appreciate this artist's celebration of the country that welcomed him as a citizen and became his own.

Assisting Mr. Adelson in organizing this exhibition is Pamela A. Ivinski, a contributor to *Maurice Brazil Prendergast and Charles Prendergast: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Williams College Museum of Art and Prestel, 1990). She currently serves as Senior Research Associate for the Mary Cassatt Catalogue Raisonné Committee, which, along with the John Singer Sargent catalogue raisonné, is supported by Adelson Galleries. A catalogue for *Maurice Prendergast: Paintings of America* will include color plates of all the works on view and feature important new scholarship, including essays by Nancy Mowll Mathews, Eugénie Prendergast Curator at the Williams College Museum of Art and co-author of the Prendergast catalogue raisonné, Pamela A. Ivinski and Warren Adelson.

On May 15, 2003, there will be a preview of *Maurice Prendergast: Paintings of America* in celebration of the American Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art. For further information on this special evening, please contact Andrea Maltese at 212.439.6800.

Adelson Galleries, Inc., is open to the public Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30 and will be open on Saturdays during this exhibition from 10-5.

The galleries are located in The Mark Hotel, 25 East 77th Street, Third Floor, New York, NY.

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