

SHIRL GOEDIKE: THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

Shirl Goedike was a successful and eminent painter when I met him for the first time in 1980 in New York. His gentle manner was immediately appealing, and he spoke directly and with candor about his work and his life. He described his long association with Ankrum Gallery in Los Angeles, whose Director, Joan Ankrum, was still a legendary and vital figure in the California art world. Shirl spoke about the south of France and his residence there for so many years. He and his wife Mary had been living part of the year in Los Angeles, and they travelled to their home in St-Paul-de-Vence to spend the spring, summer and fall. It is this locale that has inspired the majority of Shirl's paintings. He explained the special light and the glorious palette of this part of France, and how that had been inspirational to his painting for many years. He loved the sea with its beaches, bathers, and fishing boats; the belle epoque architecture of the houses, shops, and buildings; the interiors of cafes; the richly hued landscape and gardens; and the people in the towns and on the beaches who thrived in this singular part of the world.

Shirl told me that he painted in oil and in watercolor and both media served him well. The oil paintings, like *Spring Sun* (fig. 6) in this exhibition, often have a strong architectural element to the composition. Here, the pattern of the white cabanas and the shuttered doors form a decorative screen for the diagonal posture of the reclining woman, lost to the world in sunbathing. The Mediterranean sun spotlights her and casts shadows on the stage-like setting. We glimpse between the cabana edges to see the blue of the Mediterranean and the bright, clear sky above. The striped red curtain on the left that encloses the composition accents the woman's red towel. *The*

Old Casino, Nice (fig. 13) moves the viewer close to the architecture as we overlook sprays of palmettos in the foreground. This close-up view is much like the compositional device that John Singer Sargent employed, where the architecture was seen only in bits and sections, and the interest of the painting was the abstract compositional creation of the artist. Shirl uses these deeply shadowed arches in the powerful sunlight to peek through at the building beyond, its burnt orange facade and roof bathed in sunlight.

Watercolor has been a special medium for Shirl, and the fluidity and transparent color of this difficult technique has been especially suited to his subject matter. *Facades of Nice, Place Massena* (fig. 14) has the artist articulating the facade of the 19th-century building while the luminous sunlight plays with the burnt sienna of the painted surface and like-colored awnings; the facade dotted with the deep blue of the sky in the mullioned windows, their yellowed shutters providing vertical accents. *Off Cannes with Jean Jacques* (fig. 5) is a glorious day on the water. The blue sky and the azure sea enclose the white sails and hull of the craft. The shore and landscape of the Cote d'Azur provides a dense green background. The brushstrokes are swift and confident, and the artist has complete control of this daunting medium.

Over the years we have happily produced many exhibitions of Shirl's work in New York and in France, Monte Carlo, and Jordan. It has been a joy to work with him as an artist and as a friend. His paintings have not lost their special appeal, and my wife, Jan, and I are particularly pleased to present this exhibition at Adelson Galleries.

WARREN ADELSON