



THE
SHELDON
Arts Without Borders

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 1, 2022

**INSTALLATION OF WORKS BY ST. LOUIS-BORN ARTIST WALLACE HERNDON SMITH
FEATURES PAINTINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS SHOWCASING EUROPEAN TRAVELS**

ST. LOUIS – The Sheldon Art Galleries presents *Wallace Herndon Smith - Traveling Through Europe*, March 4 – May 7, 2022 in the Bellwether Gallery of St. Louis Artists. A free public opening will be held **Friday, March 4, 2022 from 5-8 p.m. Galleries are open until 9 p.m. for First Fridays in Grand Center.** Gallery hours are Tuesdays – Fridays, Noon – 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission. Admission is free.



The exhibit features oil paintings and photographs by Wallace Herndon Smith, painted from the 1950s through the 1970s, focusing on his travels through Europe. Smith was always a painter with traditional sensibilities who shunned abstract expressionism. However, his works show a keen interest for underlying abstract concepts like structure, composition and color relationships.

Smith took many photographs on his travels that eventually became subject matter for his paintings. This exhibit features the paintings alongside the photographs that inspired the work.

Combining formal concerns with the emotional, Smith brought his own form of experimentation to his, first in atmospheric, tightly rendered works reminiscent of the Regionalists, and later in colorful, exuberant paintings that used loose brushwork and evoked the work of Europeans like Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse. Throughout his long career, Smith felt that his painting should reflect “life and the world” by representing elements of the visible environment.

All works from the collection are from The Bellwether Foundation, unless otherwise noted.

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Born in 1901, Smith studied at *l'École des Beaux-Arts* in 1927, returning a year later to enroll in Washington University's architectural program, where he studied with Louis LaBeaume. He designed several homes, but painting remained the focus of his attention. In 1932 he and his wife Kelse moved to New York and befriended artists including Walt Kuhn, Francis Bacon and Edward Hopper, who recommended one of his paintings for a prize in an exhibition in Philadelphia. Landscapes and street scenes from this period, and later, reflect Hopper's influence on Smith's work. In the late 1930s, Smith gained attention in New York and his work was included in exhibitions in New York galleries and at the Museum of Modern Art. During these early days, his work was characterized by its affinity to American Regionalism and his portraits were highly finished, quiet examinations of his subjects.

Smith and his wife moved to Philadelphia and both taught at the Tyler School of Art from 1938- 1939. During the war years, the couple moved several times, spending large periods of time in St. Louis; Provincetown, Massachusetts; and Harbor Springs, Michigan, where Smith established a studio by Lake Michigan. Smith's work continued to gain maturity, and in the 1960s began to be characterized by loose brushwork. He studied physiognomy, color theory and composition, creating colorful, spontaneous renderings of friends, family, models and the architecture found on his travels. His works illustrate a keen sensitivity to the psychological resonance of color, form, gesture and above all, the atmosphere of a place. Always inquisitive and passionate about painting, Smith left behind a substantial body of work that reveals the artist's visual intelligence.

For more information, visit TheSheldon.org or call 314-533-9900. More information about each individual exhibit available upon request.

The Sheldon continues to monitor the regulations and recommendations set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the City of St. Louis regarding the COVID-19 outbreak. **In accordance with City of St. Louis guidelines, we require everyone over the age of 5 wear a mask.** For an updated list of health and safety guidelines for concerts and gallery exhibits please visit <https://www.thesheldon.org/covid-updates/>.

Financial Assistance to the Galleries are provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency and by the Regional Arts Commission and the Arts and Education Council.

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Image caption: Wallace Herndon Smith, *The Duomo*, Florence, Italy, 1953, oil on canvas, 19 x 29 inches. Courtesy of Bellwether Foundation