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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PAINTINGS BY WALLACE HERNDON SMITH FEATURED  
AT SHELDON ART GALLERIES IN NEW EXHIBIT**

ST. LOUIS, MO - The Sheldon Art Galleries presents *Wallace Herndon Smith*, February 6 – May 30, 2015 in the Bellwether Gallery of St. Louis Artists. **An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, February 6 from 5 – 7 p.m.** Galleries are open until 9 p.m. for First Fridays in Grand Center. The Sheldon Art Galleries are open Tuesdays, Noon – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays - 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. For more information on exhibitions, visit the galleries' website at [TheSheldon.org](http://TheSheldon.org).



Featured are 31 landscape and portrait paintings from 1938 to 1978 by St. Louis artist Wallace Herndon Smith from the permanent collection of the Bellwether Foundation and from a private collection in St. Louis. The exhibition is organized by the Sheldon Art Galleries.

Born in St. Louis in 1901, Wallace Herndon Smith was a traditional painter who absorbed the visual language of artists like Pierre Bonnard, Henri Matisse and Edward Hopper. Smith was fluent in many subjects including still-lives, landscapes, interiors and portraits. From an early age he showed interest in artistic endeavors. At Princeton University, where he studied architecture in the early 1920s, he joined the campus theatrical organization, the Triangle Club. Smith turned to painting after he met and married his wife, Kelse, who encouraged his artistic growth throughout his life.

In 1927 the couple moved to Paris, where for a year he studied at *l'École des Beaux-Arts*. When he returned to St. Louis a year later, he enrolled in Washington University's architectural program, studying with Louis LaBeaume. There he designed several homes, but painting remained the focus of his attention. In 1932 he and Kelse moved to New York and befriended artists like Walt Kuhn, Peggy 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 and can be seen in this exhibition. In the late 1930s, Smith's work gained attention and 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.

MORE...

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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 places he visited 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

The not-for-profit Sheldon Art Galleries exhibits works by local, national and international artists in all media. Over 6,000 square feet of the galleries' spaces on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor are permanently devoted to rotating exhibits of photography, architecture, jazz art and history and children's art. A sculpture garden, seen from both the atrium lobby and the connecting glass bridge, features periodic rotations and installations, and the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Gallery on the lower level features art of all media. The Sheldon actively supports the work of St. Louis artists in all mediums and features a dedicated gallery with museum-quality exhibits by St. Louis artists, past and present.

Financial Assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency. Support is provided by the Regional Arts Commission and the Arts and Education Council.

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**Image caption:** Wallace Herndon Smith, *Fishing Boat at Dock*, 1977, oil on canvas, 36 x 27 inches, courtesy and collection of the Bellwether Foundation.