

For interviews, please contact Adam Brooks, adam@portsmouthhistory.org
For a wealth of images, please see <http://portsmouthhistory.org/fiske-media/>

Unprecedented Year of Women's Art to Open in Portsmouth

What began as the rediscovery of one woman's incredible paintings has blossomed into five kindred exhibitions opening in Portsmouth. Perfectly timed, spring 2018 kicks off a year filled with vibrant artwork by talented women in the galleries of the Portsmouth Historical Society at Discover Portsmouth and the John Paul Jones House Museum.

Gertrude Fiske: American Master opens April 6 and runs through September 30 in the historic Academy Gallery at 10 Middle Street. A student of top American Impressionists, including Edmund C. Tarbell in Boston and Charles Woodbury in Ogunquit, Maine, Fiske developed a unique way of seeing the world. Curated by Lainey McCartney, this diverse collection of 66 works, some unseen by the public, reveals a mastery of the painter's craft being fully recognized again for the first time since her zenith in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Gertrude Fiske (1879-1961) dedicated her entire life to her art. Critics in her era recognized Fiske as adventurous, technically superb, bold, and marked "with a power and depth that very few artists, male or female, had ever achieved."

Nearby in the Special Events Gallery at Discover Portsmouth is a companion exhibition curated by Richard Candee of Fiske's contemporaries. "*Sisters of the Brush and Palette*" features painters Anne W. Carleton, Margaret J. Patterson, and the notable Portsmouth artist, Susan Ricker Knox. This bonus presentation allows visitors a glimpse inside the world of Fiske's talented female friends. Some of them, known as "The Pine Hill Girls," also trained under Charles Woodbury while living and painting on Pine Hill Road in Ogunquit.

The past meets the present in the Balcony Gallery with highlights from working artists. Like Fiske and the Pine Hill Girls, these modern women exhibit their skill, drive, passion, and creativity in "*Seacoast Masters Today*." Featured artists include Amy Brnger, Donna Harkins, Sydney Bella Sparrow, and Pamela DuLong Williams.

On October 19 (through December 23) the Balcony Gallery makes way for the work of a well known local artist with "*Of Family & Memory: Rose Labrie, New Hampshire's 'Primitive Painter.'*" A series of storytime events will accompany this exhibition from October through December.

Meanwhile, across Middle Street, the John Paul Jones House Museum rounds out the "Year of Women Artists" with a fifth exhibition featuring artifacts from the Portsmouth Historical Society and a local private collection. "*Overlooked and Undervalued: Three Hundred Years of Women's Art from the Seacoast*" opens

Monday, May 28 and runs through October 8, 2018. The two-year exhibition is included with every ticket to tour the historical society's museum house and garden. The famous 1758 gambrel-roof house was once owned by Sarah Purcell, who rented a room to Revolutionary War hero John Paul Jones. It was the home of the historical society starting in 1917.

But that's not all--by a long shot. In addition to another lively year of Walking Tours, a thriving Museum Shop, welcome center guides and films, Discover Portsmouth offers a range of programs and events related to its exhibitions. They include the popular "Sketching in the Gallery" series for all ages starting April 14 and continuing on selective Saturdays. All Discover Portsmouth galleries will be open until 8pm for "Art Round Town" on the first Friday of each month beginning April 6. Ask about special free Sunday family programs related to Gertrude Fiske's life and work beginning April 22, plus lunchtime exhibition tours starting at noon on May 4 and continuing on selective Fridays.

A series of special events starts Thursday, May 17 (5:30-6:30 pm) with Erica Hirshler speaking on "Women Artists of the Boston School." A Saturday, June 16 symposium (9am - 3pm) tackles the topic "Gertrude Fiske: Her Art and Her World." Jeremy Fogg and Jared Tuveson will speak on "Discovery and Conservation of a Forgotten Fiske Masterpiece," on July 12 (5:30-6:30 pm). Historian Richard Candee discusses "Sisters of the Brush & Palette" on August 23 (5:30-6:30 pm). A final symposium on September 22 (9am - 3pm) wraps up the series with "A Strong Legacy Continued: Women's Rights Today."

Be sure to mark your calendar for the Portsmouth Historical Society Annual Meeting (May 3), the Discover Portsmouth 10th Anniversary (May 21), John Paul Jones' Birthday Party (July 8) and John Paul Jones Jubilee and Silent Auction (September 6). Don't forget the NH Film Festival headquarters at Discover Portsmouth (October 11-14), the annual "It's Pastel" juried show (October 19-November 24), our Portsmouth Advocates Awards Night (November 15) and the beloved 28th Annual Gingerbread House Contest (December 1-23). And look for our year-end exhibition entitled, "A Nineteenth-Century Facebook™: Portraits from the Portsmouth Historical Society Collection" (October 19-December 23).

Founded in 1917, Portsmouth Historical Society, is a nonprofit devoted to championing the history, arts, and culture of the Portsmouth region through acquisitions, preservation, museum exhibitions, programs, and publications. Always check with our website to confirm dates and times at PortsmouthHistory.org or call 603-436-8433. Our exhibitions are free and open to the public. Memberships, Visitor Donations and Museum Shop purchases including a 108-page Gertrude Fiske exhibition catalogue, help support our nonprofit programs, collections, and services. The welcome center and galleries are open daily, April 1 - December 23 from 9:30am to 5pm. John Paul Jones House opens Memorial Day, Monday May 28, 7 days a week, 11am-5pm through Columbus Day Monday October 8 + Veterans Day, Sunday November 11.