



WALTER FARNDON, N.A. (1876-1964)

*Exhibition VI*

VOSE GALLERIES

Cover Image: *Dories in Harbor*

Oil on canvas, 35 1/8 x 41 7/8 inches, SLR: *Walter Farndon*

Opposite Page: *Homecoming, Gloucester Docks, Massachusetts*

Oil on canvas, 35 1/8 x 42 1/8 inches, SLR: *Walter Farndon NA*



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NOVEMBER 6 - DECEMBER 14, 2013

VOSE | Fine American Art for Six Generations  
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*Library Plaza, New York City*  
Oil on board, 10 x 8 inches, SLL: Farndon



*Footpath over River*  
Oil on board, 12 x 16 inches  
Collection of Abbot and Marcia Vose

## INTRODUCTION

Of the thirty-five or so estates we have handled during our tenure at Vose Galleries, we can safely say that the Walter Farndon estate has been the most successful of them all. Since 1991 we have held six exhibitions of the artist's paintings, working with the artist's stepdaughter, and have sold hundreds of oils and watercolors to a very receptive audience. One might wonder why so many of Farndon's paintings were left in his estate, and, like so many artists, we can only surmise that Farndon would rather have spent his time painting than promoting his work. While he was in many prestigious group exhibitions, there were only four solo sales exhibitions, which were held at the well-known Grand Central Art Galleries in New York City in 1926, 1928, 1945 and 1946.

In this sixth exhibition we present the last of the Farndon estate paintings, including some major canvases that the family and their advisor have held back until now. While Farndon was very consistent in the quality of his work, this group, offered for the first time, presents the chance to view a range of first-class examples that will likely not be seen again.

We thought you might like to see one of the Farndon paintings in our personal collection, titled *Footpath over River* (lower left). We love the broken brushwork, reminiscent of Prendergast, and there are several in this show that exhibit this look, particularly *Library Plaza, New York City* (left), *Figures with Sailboats* (p.15), *Figures on Shore* (p.15), *Figures with Street Car* (p.18) and *The Old Fountain, Flushing, New York* (p.24). If only we had more wall space!

—Abbot W. Vose and Marcia L. Vose





*Coal Dock, Gloucester, Massachusetts*

Oil on canvas, 34 7/8 x 42 inches, SLL: *Walter Farndon NA*

## WALTER FARNDON, N.A.

Living and working in an era of passionate and often controversial changes in the art world, Walter Farndon managed to retain the essential personal pleasure of creation. Able to find and develop “the thing you are fitted to do and delight in doing,”<sup>1</sup> Farndon translated his natural exuberance and love of his surroundings into personal expressions of lasting beauty. Called “The Painter’s Painter” in New York circles, he let his energy flow from his brush, capturing some of America’s most dramatic scenery in a bold, inimitable style.

The young Farndon’s artistic inclination came naturally; his maternal grandmother was a stained glass designer, and his father, Amos Farndon, a silk weaver and designer. Just after Walter’s eleventh birthday, they emigrated from Coventry, England, settling in Yonkers, New York. Farndon was expected to contribute to the support of his two brothers and sister, and following in his relatives’ footsteps, found a job in the designing room of the Abe Smith Carpet Company in Yonkers. Beginning at three dollars a week, Farndon quickly advanced to the sum of eighteen dollars—enough to send his sister Eunice to music school and his brother Ernest to Cooper Union. Working free-hand in opaque watercolors, Farndon created designs that were then reproduced to full size. The process “gave a good deal of freedom in handling and allow[ed] for some originality...” and instilled in the young artist “a love for color that has remained with me all my life.”<sup>2</sup> Delighting in the creative process, Farndon developed a bold approach to the handling of paint, and was more determined than ever to spend his life exploring the many facets of color.

Farndon was encouraged to become a professional artist by his supervisor, Ernest Parton, who later became a National Academician, and especially by George Stengel, who became a well-respected landscape painter. Determined to follow in their footsteps, Farndon left the carpet factory after a few years to enroll in the free school of the National Academy of Design. After thirteen attempts, his drawing of a plaster cast of the *Discobolus*—which he worked on nightly for an entire month—was

finally accepted by the Academy Committee. Farndon began classes in 1898, studying under Edgar M. Ward:

*Thus I entered the long road to artistic expression and every night, after eating my dinner on the train, there not being time to go home and get a meal, would see me installed at seven o’clock before a plaster cast in the Academy Schools.<sup>3</sup>*

Like many of his contemporaries Farndon also hoped to develop and augment his academic foundation through travel and study in Europe. His dream was shattered in 1885, however, when his father died, and the responsibility of caring for the family came to rest upon his young shoulders. Despite the personal upset in his life, the artist sought to make his years at the Academy as rich and rewarding as possible. He established lifelong friendships with kindred spirits and talents. Farndon persuaded Jonas Lie to join his art class at the Academy, alongside Maurice Sterne, John Costigan, George Elmer Browne and Ivan Olinsky. Competitive and energetic, class members vied for awards and prizes, and eschewed formal instruction for more enriching group critiques and discussions. Several of his class members at the Academy, including Lie, Sterne, Costigan, Browne and Olinsky, became known as the “Outlaws” or “Insurgents.” Along with progressive forces such as J. Alden Weir, the “Insurgents” spearheaded the American Impressionist movement developing in New York at the close of the Century.

Out of the loose organization of the “Insurgents” evolved what became known as the Country Sketch Club, founded in early 1897. In keeping with the desire for an unfettered, informal environment in which to develop their creative talents, the club sought “to found a permanent home where students with limited time and means [could] paint and study, unrestrained from the drudgery of the class-room.”<sup>4</sup> Originally housed in the Wall Street home of an Episcopal minister of Trinity Church, the club soon outgrew its quarters and rented the upper floor of a house in Far Rockaway, New Jersey, and then rented property in nearby Ridgefield. Farndon regarded the Sketch Club



years as some of the happiest of his life. Living in a bohemian paradise, club members—and visitors such as Charles Hawthorne and Marsden Hartley—depicted the stunning scenery of the Hackensack Valley, and exhibited in Academy quarters, beginning in 1901. The artists, working for the sheer pleasure of their craft, made little money; most worked during the day. Farndon was employed as a sculptor at the Edwin Shuttleworth Marble Company, and created works that grace the Plaza Hotel, Radio City, and Western Union building in New York.

After ten years in New Jersey, Farndon sought other sources of inspiration, most often from seaside location. Favorite areas included Rockport, Boothbay Harbor and Monhegan Island, Maine; northern Vermont; Gloucester and Eastport, Massachusetts; Long Island and the Hudson Valley, New York; and Nova Scotia. Farndon kept numerous scrapbooks and albums of these areas, took photographs and collected postcards, newspaper articles, and images of other artists' renditions of these popular colonies.

A rapid painter who clutched his brush in his fist, Farndon captured spontaneous, fresh, impressions on canvas. Layers of thick impasto created a sense of movement and life, an instant of light and color. Indeed, his chromatic brilliance was so dramatic that his nine color palette—emeraude, ultramarine, titanium white, zinc yellow, medium cadmium, deep cadmium, yellow ochre, alizarin crimson, burnt umber and black—became famous.<sup>5</sup>

Farndon's exuberant canvases found a ready audience and market, as the artist embarked upon an exhaustive series of exhibitions. Some of the highlights included semi-annual shows at the National Academy between 1902 and 1950; the Salmagundi Club; Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1914; over ten exhibitions at the Allied Artists of America; and a group exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in 1931. Farndon's small works, termed "thumb box sketches" and regularly featured at J. J. Gillespie Gallery in Pittsburgh, were hailed as "poetic notes of passing effects."<sup>6</sup> Some, primed only with glue, achieve an unusually delicate, tapestry-like effect, while others hallmark his vivid juxtapositions of color and shape.

Despite being able to devote only part of his time to painting, Farndon participated in a number of art organizations and amassed an impressive number of awards and prizes. On October 11, 1933, he was elected by the National Academy to the highest honor an artist can hope for: National Academician. Earning the title fulfilled a dream Farndon had held since his young days at the Smith Carpet Factory.

A man of generous spirit, Farndon sought to share his delight in painting with others. He presented numerous painting demonstrations and donated his canvases to several hospitals and churches. Although he never formally taught, he offered advice to a small number of professional artists. With Farndon's death in Valley Stream, New York on November 24, 1964, America lost "the last of the first American Impressionists."<sup>7</sup> He left behind an accumulation of canvases that show a love of free expression and an obvious joy in his surroundings.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Walter Farndon, *Rewards in Art*, unpublished.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Farndon, ca. 1899, unpublished letter.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Country Sketch Club, exhibition catalogue, 1901.

<sup>5</sup>*South Shore Record*, October 4, 1962.

<sup>6</sup>*The Spectator*, November 11, 1913.

<sup>7</sup>*South Shore Record*, October 4, 1962.

For an expanded biography and personal reminiscence by Farndon's niece, Anita Tamm, see *Walter Farndon N.A., Exhibition I*, (Vose Galleries, 1991).



*Factory from the Pier*  
Oil on board, 10 1/8 x 8 inches

*“...the principal payment for an artist is not in money...but in the personal satisfaction of creating beauty (as personally seen and felt), and giving to others some of the pleasure you have experienced in the producing.”*

—Walter Farndon



*Dory in Yard*  
Oil on masonite  
14 x 18 inches  
SLR: Walter Farndon NA





*Half Moon*

Oil on canvas, 36 1/4 x 30 1/8 inches, SLL: Walter Farndon





*Airplane Factory, Port Washington, New York*  
Oil on canvas, 30 x 36 inches, SLR: Walter Farndon NA





*Boathouse and Dock in Storm, Nova Scotia, Canada*

Oil on canvas, 35 1/8 x 42 1/8 inches, SLR: Walter Farndon NA





*Lowered Sails*  
Oil on board  
14 x 18 inches



*New England Boatyard*  
Oil on canvas board  
13 7/8 x 17 7/8 inches  
SLC: Walter Farndon NA





*Backward Sail, Fire Island, New York*

Oil on masonite, 23 15/16 x 29 7/8 inches, signed verso: *Walter Farndon NA*

*“Walter Farndon has long been a favorite. You stand aghast and say ‘How can impasto exhibit such exact draughtsmanship!’”*

*—Chelsea-Clinton News, August 9, 1951*





*Boathouse in Afternoon*

Oil on canvas board

14 x 17 15/16 inches

SLR: Walter Farndon NA



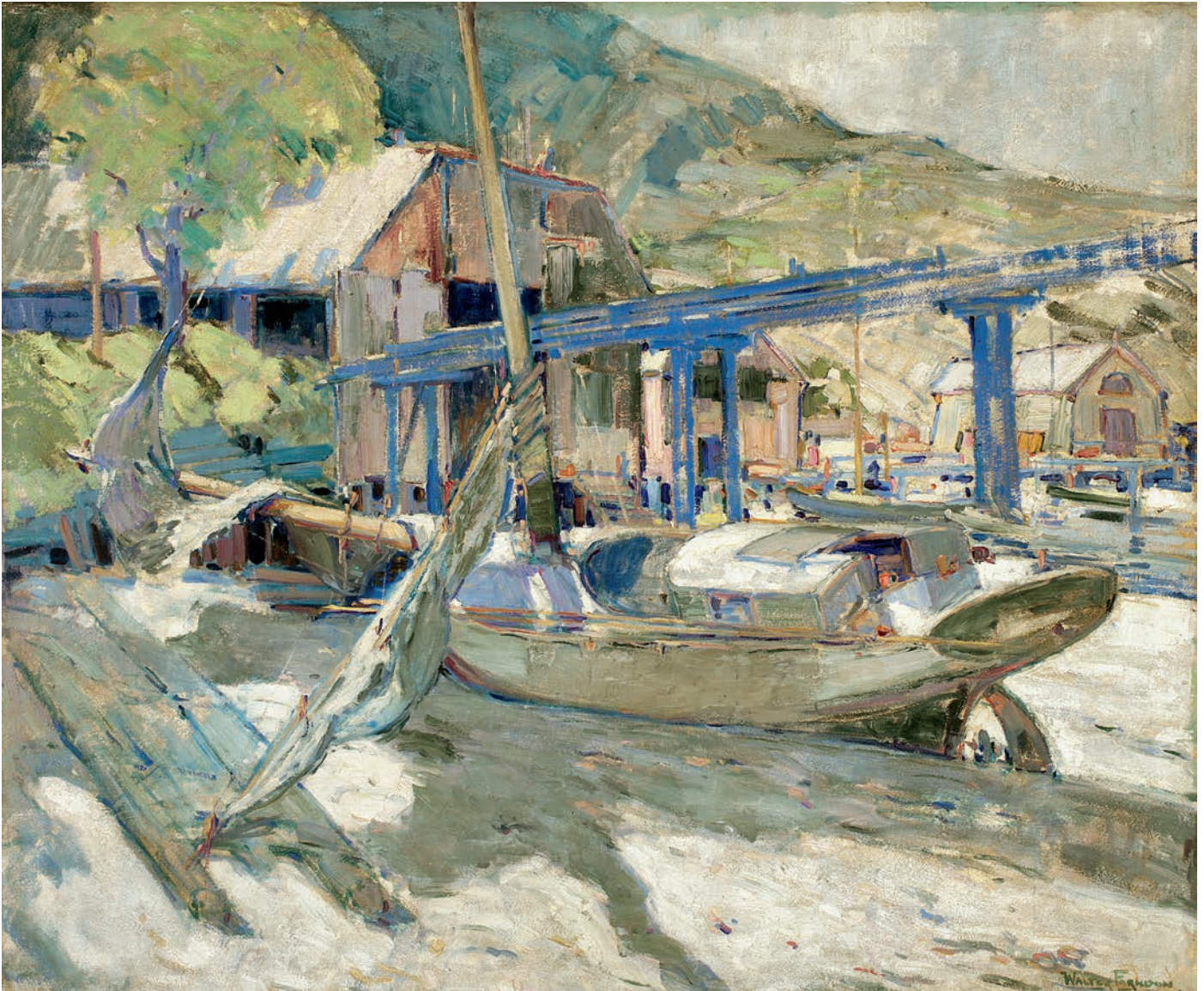
*Two Dorries by a Red House*

Oil on canvas board

14 x 18 inches

SLL: Walter Farndon NA





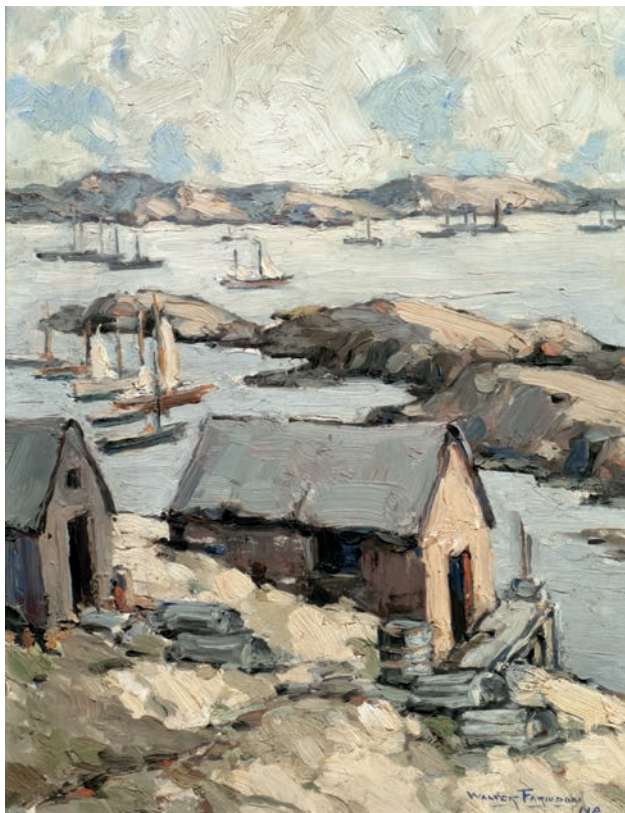
*Beached Boat*

Oil on canvas, 35 x 42 inches, SLR: Walter Farndon

*“...Do surface showing sunlight first. If it is clear in your mind the rest is easy...Color should be put on the canvas at once, brightly, briskly and right. There is another thing here to remember. Put paint on your canvas and not on your palette. In this way you preserve the natural look of the work...”*

—Walter Farndon





*Down to the Sea*

Oil on masonite, 18 x 14 inches

SLR: Walter Farndon NA



*Dories at Low Tide*

Oil on canvas

25 1/4 x 30 1/4 inches

SLL: Walter Farndon NA





*Figures with Sailboats*  
Oil on board  
8 x 10 inches  
SLL: Farndon



*Figures on Shore*  
Oil on board  
8 x 10 inches  
SLL: W. Farndon





*Green Lawn with Figures by Water*  
Oil on board  
8 x 9 7/8 inches



*Beach, Black Bathing Suits*  
Oil on board  
8 x 10 inches





*Beach Scene with Lone Figure*  
Oil on board  
8 x 10 inches  
SLR: Walter Farndon



*Beach Sketch*  
Oil on board  
8 x 10 inches





*Stuyvesant Square, New York*  
Oil on masonite, 30 x 25 inches  
SLR: Walter Farndon NA



*Figures with Street Car*  
Oil on board, 8 x 10 inches  
SLL: Farndon





*Reflections from Bridge in Spring*

Oil on canvas, 26 x 32 1/4 inches, SLL: Walter Farndon NA

*“...Walter Farndon has canvases that have a delightful freshness of vision that makes a felicitous picture of quite ordinary landscape material. There seems always to be spontaneity and the joy of creative power in his work...”*

*—New York Post, May 19, 1920*





*The Portico, Union Square, New York City*  
Oil on board, 10 x 8 inches, SLL: Farndon

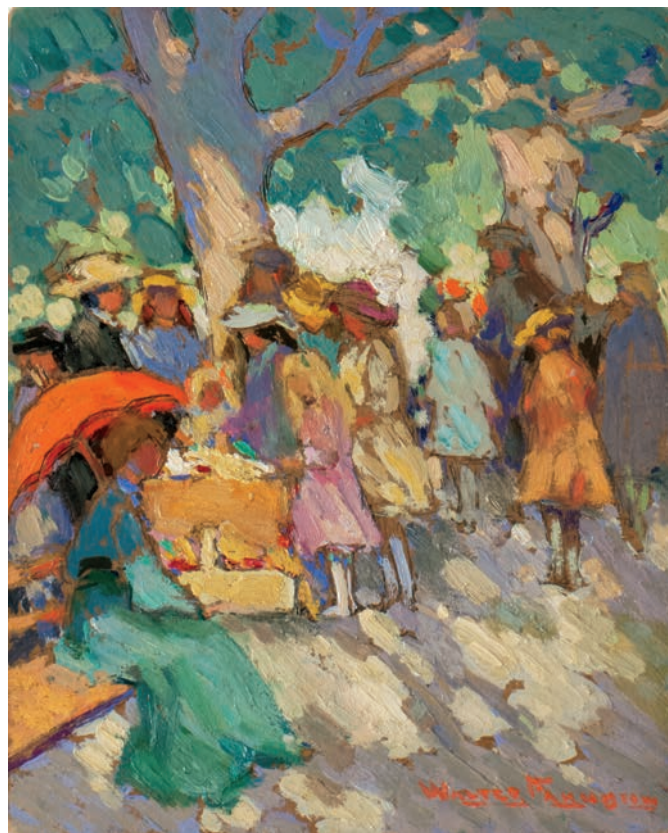


*Cinema at Night*  
Oil on board, 10 x 7 5/8 inches  
Estate stamped





*The Yellow Sunshade*  
Oil on board, 10 x 8 inches, SLL: Walter Farndon NA



*The Red Parasol*  
Oil on board, 10 x 8 inches, SLR: Walter Farndon





*House on Hill*

Oil on board, 10 x 11 inches  
SLL: Walter Farndon

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Allied Artists of America, NY: 1924, 1925, 1939, 1941,  
1947, 1949, 1961-1964  
American Artists' Professional League, NY: 1944  
American Watercolor Society: 1964  
Architectural and Allied Arts Exposition, NY: 1929  
Arts Commission of the City of New York  
Art Institute of Chicago, IL: 1901  
Art League of Long Island, NY: 1956, 1958, 1959  
Arts Council of New York: 1924, 1929  
Audubon Artists, National Academy, NY: 1958  
Brooklyn Art Museum, NY: 1931  
Brooklyn Society of Artists, NY: 1921  
Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, PA  
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.  
Country Sketch Club, NY: 1901-1903  
Fort Worth Museum of Art, Fort Worth, TX: 1933  
Grand Central Art Galleries, NY: 1926, 1928, 1945, 1946  
Guild of American Painters: 1921, 1922, 1925, 1933  
Hofstra College, Long Island, NY: 1955  
J. J. Gillespie & Co. Galleries, Pittsburgh, PA

MacDowell Club Exhibition, NY: 1939  
Municipal Art Galleries, NY: 1939  
Nassau Art League, NY  
Nassau County Museum of Fine Arts, Roslyn, NY: 1984  
National Academy of Design, NY: 1914, 1902-1906,  
1909-1913, 1915-1920, 1922-1938, 1940-1951,  
1953, 1965  
National Arts Club, NY: 1910, 1930, 1950, 1958, 1959  
New York Watercolor Club: 1935  
New York Watercolor Club and American Watercolor  
Society Annual Exhibition: 1923, 1924, 1928  
New Rochelle Art Association, NY  
New York Society of Painters: 1936, 1937  
Orlando Art Association, Orlando, FL  
Panama-Pacific International Exposition: 1914  
Salmagundi Club: 1922, 1929  
Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH: 19th Annual  
Valley National Bank, Valley Stream, NY: 1962  
Valley Stream Community Arts Council, NY: 1962  
Vanderbilt Gallery, NY: 1915  
Westchester Association, NY  
Yonkers Art Association, Yonkers, NY



## PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Brooklyn Art Museum, Brooklyn, NY  
 Hickory Museum of Art, Hickory, NC  
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY  
 National Academy of Design, NY  
 National Arts Club, NY  
 Salmagundi Club, NY

## MEMBERSHIPS

Allied Artists of America (Assistant Treasurer and  
 elected Honorary Member, 1947)  
 American Artists' Professional League  
 American Watercolor Society (Treasurer,  
 1928-1930; elected Life Member, 1961)  
 Artists' Fellowship  
 Audubon Society  
 Grand Central Art Galleries  
 Guild of American Painters  
 National Academy of Design (elected Associate,  
 1928; full Academician, 1937)  
 National Arts Club (elected Life Member, 1930)  
 New York Watercolor Club (elected 1927)  
 New York Society of Painters (elected 1927)  
 Salmagundi Club (Vice-Chairman of Art  
 Committee, 1927-1928)  
 Society of New York Painters

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

Allied Artists of America: Friedrichs Prize (1940, 1942);  
 Egan Prize (1944); Carnegie Prize (Honorable  
 Mention, twice); Outstanding Oil (1949);  
 Certif. of Merit (1962)  
 American Artists' Professional League: I.B.M. Purchase  
 Prize (1944, 1948)  
 American Watercolor Society and New York Watercolor  
 Club: Hammond Prize (1925); Cert. of Merit (1962)  
 Art League of Long Island: Gold Medal (1960); Third  
 Prize (1961); Gold Medal, 50 Years' Work in Art  
 English Royal Academy of Art: Award of Merit (1962)  
 Hudson Valley Arts Association: Jasper Cropsey  
 Landscape Award, Gold Medal Citation for  
 50 Years of Art Contribution (1951)  
 Nassau Art League: Second Prize (1929)

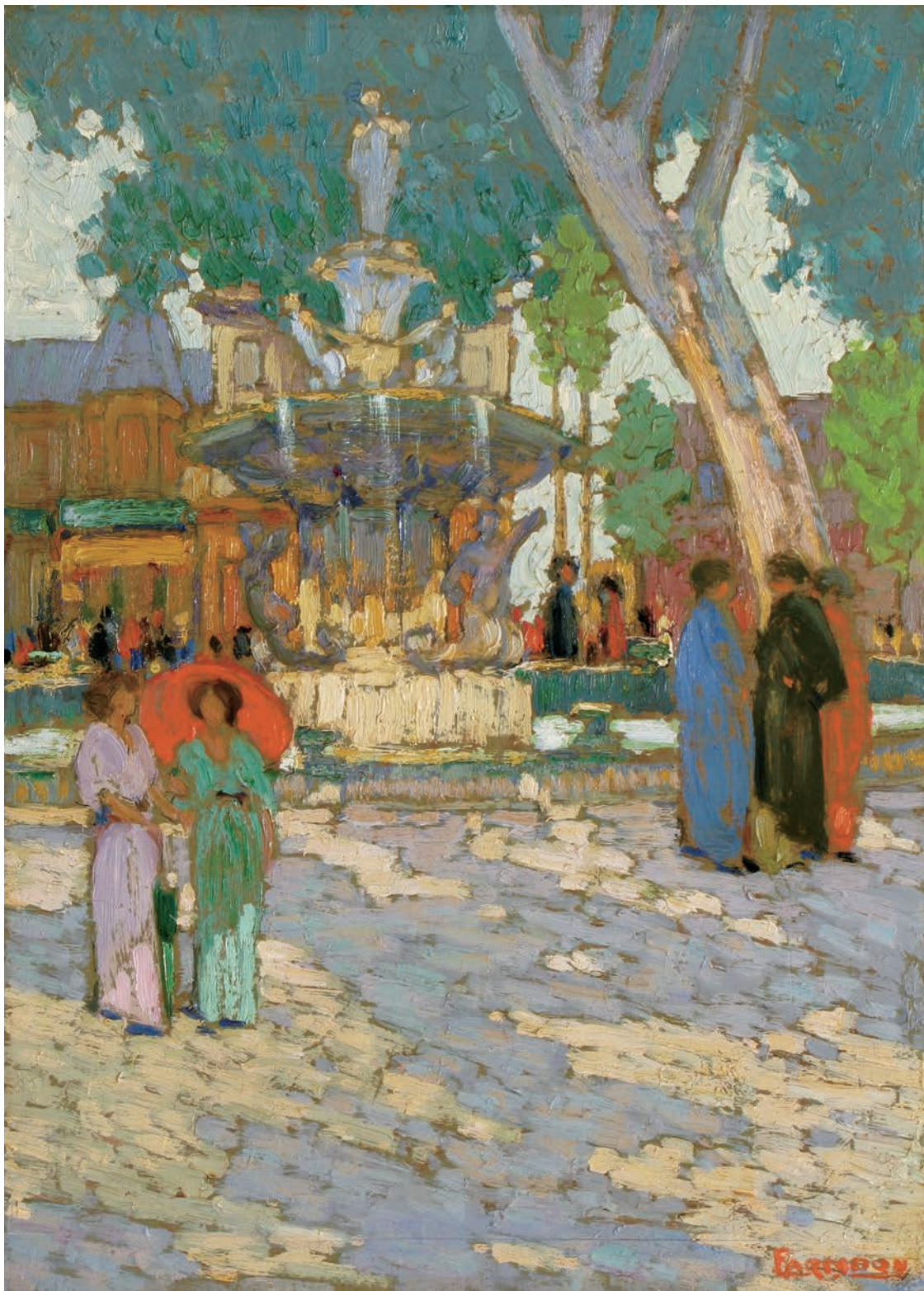


*A Thames Village, Remembrances of England*

Oil on masonite, 18 x 14 inches, SLL: Walter Farndon NA

National Academy of Design: Altman Prize (1944, Honorable  
 Mention); Elliot Silver Medal, Carnegie Prize (1944);  
 First Prize (1942, 1944); Second Prize (1959)  
 National Arts Club: First Prize (1942); Heinrich Prize, First  
 Prize (1930, 1944); Talcott Prize, Gold Medal (1939);  
 Bronze Medal (1957, 1962); Friedrichs Award (1959);  
 Purchase Prize (1930); Honorable Mention (1952);  
 Certificate of Merit (1959)  
 Salmagundi Club: Vezin Prize (1929); Turnbull Prize (1919,  
 1944); Shaw Prize (1944); Hammond Prize, Heinrich  
 Prize (1929); Friedrichs Prize (1926, 1928, 1940);  
 Group Prize; Isodor Prize (1929); Salmagundi Prize  
 for Small Picture (1925)  
 New Jersey Federation of Women's Clubs: First Prize (1930)  
 Westchester Association: Gold Medal (1958)





*The Old Fountain, Flushing, New York*

Oil on wood panel, 16 x 11 7/8 inches, SLR: Farndon, circa 1915



*“[Farndon’s] paintings are delightful in their quality of paint, and are an individual expression of color. In this it is evident he pleases himself, and consequently, all others as well...”*

*—Pittsburgh Spectator, November 11, 1913*



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