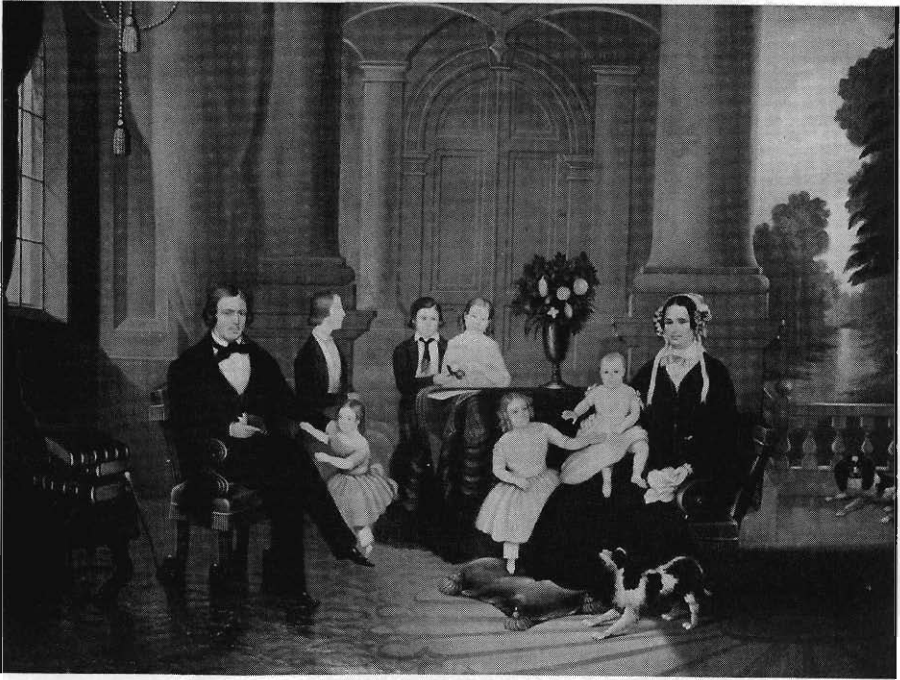




JOHN HAFEN: *Pasture*



WILLIAM M. MAJOR: *Brigham Young, Mary Ann Angel Young and Family*

Fine Arts Center at Brigham Young University. Art thrives by its separate dignity, not by being made part of an open lobby. When art is finally liberated from the society and entertainment sections of newspapers, and when it comes off the walls of converted tearooms, top floors, or basements of other structures and is installed in a properly designed, humidity-controlled, air-conditioned, properly lighted modern museum, then shall we have come of age in the arts.

And then, we can hope, the rich collections of Brigham Young University will have the professional attention — documentation, interpretation, exhibition, and conservation — they deserve. It is all very well to say that art should be integrated with life. That it should. But the scholarly responsibilities must be met if the culture is to be more than a superficial or transitory one. The quixotic remark of the contemporary American painter, Ad Reinhardt, "Art is art and everything else is everything else," has much relevance.

Another hinderance to the full development of art in Utah, one which has most likely been influenced by Mormon attitudes, is the denial of the use of the nude model in all but one of the art departments of our institutions of higher learning, although other educational institutions have sporadically employed nude models, for instance, Brigham Young University, for a brief period in the late 1930's. How preposterous such proscription can be is best illustrated by a recent student exhibition of figure drawings, arranged by an art professor in one of Utah's universities. The female model was drawn attired in a sou'wester, long raincoat and rubber boots. The exhibition's wry title was "This is how we learn human anatomy."

It is ironical that such attitudes should persist. All Utah students in Paris art schools drew little except the male and female nude. Their Paris sketches are used today as instructional devices in schools where students have never seen a gluteus maximus in its natural state.

Another difficulty faced by art instructors is the problem of having to tell the student that the official, spectacular art commissioned by the Church, or the architecture it now espouses, are not often of significant quality. The Church has implied they are; therefore, the devout young student believes they are. The Mormon instructor does not like to contradict his Church, yet he must often do so if he is to be true to himself and academically responsible.

#### ADVANCES IN RELIGIOUS COMMERCIAL ART

In commercial art one can see glimmerings of hope in the employment by the Church of artists of stature and imagination. *The Improvement Era*, tastefully redesigned by Ralph Reynolds, comes

immediately to mind, as do the issues of *The Children's Friend* during the six months that Reynolds and Ed Maryon introduced style and grace to its pages. Distinguished illustrations and layout design by Maryon, V. Douglas Snow, F. Anthony Smith, Pete Lefon, Warren and Phyllis Luch, Gerald Purdy, Martha Estus, Sherman Martin, Ted Nagata, Paul Hasegawa, Keith Montague, Keith Edgington and others are more frequently being used in Church publications. Much remains to be done to elevate the quality of art in some fields of commercial design, especially that of book jackets, but encouraging progress has been made and fewer restrictions seem to be now placed on the artist, with non-Mormon artists frequently hired. I am tempted to hope that such progress augurs well for the abandonment, or at least the mellowing, of Utah's traditional suspicion of the professional. Such distrust has been another great hinderance to the visual arts.

We have never quite understood, even though the Church sent artists to Paris for study, that, as August Heckscher has said:

Art is a matter for professionals. Its practice requires training, discipline and the most unflagging dedication. Nothing is more appealing in the United States today than the enthusiasm with which do-it-yourself culture is followed by the people. The activities of Sunday painters, amateur actors, weavers, wood-workers, musicians, etc. — all have their value. They are part of the constructive use of leisure . . . . But they do not attain, except in the most exceptional cases, the level of true art. The line between the professional and the amateur, between the artist and the audience, is one that any first-rate culture must maintain.<sup>18</sup>

The Mormon Church — with its emphasis on self-sufficiency, donated services, and on an amateur rather than a paid, professional clergy — has no doubt reinforced the typical pioneer admiration of the man capable of doing any task himself and the pioneer notion of art as a kind of frill, or, at best, a fancy sort of recreation. The difficulty is that “art is not self-evident nor of necessity immediately enjoyable. It requires in the spectator an effort of the spirit and of the mind, sufficient to put himself in harmony with a vision other than his own . . . .”<sup>19</sup> During the hard first decade of the building of Zion, few had time, energy, or the educational resources to make the effort; too few of us even today are willing to try.

---

<sup>18</sup> August Heckscher, “The Quality of American Culture.” Chapter 5, p. 135, of *Goals for Americans, Comprising the Report of the President's Commission on National Goals and Chapters Submitted for Consideration of the Commission* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

Dozens of Mormon artists stand ready to use their considerable talent in the service of the Church, though many have been disillusioned by what Dr. Monsen (who among Mormons possesses the greatest private art collections) has called the "generally low esthetic appreciation on the part of the church leaders."<sup>20</sup> In recent years a number of devout Mormons have expressed to me concern that many of their fellow artists will be leaving the Church if such lack of appreciation continues. Others have complained that the demands of the Church for their services in other areas have left them with little time to paint. Another was deeply hurt when church officials scorned his unorthodox, but powerfully conceived, abstract paintings in an exhibition of religious art. One of Utah's most sensitive architects tells of the rejection in thirty seconds by high church officials of designs he had spent months to develop.

In other religions and sects — particularly among the Catholics, the Jews, the Lutherans, and occasionally the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Unitarians — we see the acceptance of the best artists, architects, and craftsmen as co-workers in the realm of the spirit.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — with its numerous building projects, extensive publication program, and proliferating radio, motion picture and television activities — has a unique opportunity to bring the creative artist and the Church into productive partnership. A simple experiment, administered perhaps by the Department of Art of Brigham Young University, might provide the encouragement and impetus artists are waiting for and would enable church officials to see and evaluate the wealth of talent available to them. With the outlay of modest funds, the Church could sponsor a design competition, open to Mormons and non-Mormons alike, for the design of, say, a chapel, a mural, a sculpture, a fountain, a mosaic, a stained glass window, a series of illustrations of Book of Mormon subjects, a book, a folder, a pamphlet, a magazine cover, a filmstrip, a short motion picture, an exhibition catalog, an exhibition design. The prospectus would detail only the technical limitations and would not delimit style or mode. A jury, composed of nationally recognized professionals, would award monetary prizes in each field; prize winners might be assured of future commissions by the Church. The winners' designs would be on exhibition for an appropriate period of time.

If the Church had had the benefit of viewing the work of some of its more creative members and non-members in this context, the artistic level of the Mormon Pavilion at the New York World's Fair might have been greatly elevated.

---

<sup>20</sup> Monsen, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

Such a competition might also bring to light contemporary artists with zeal comparable to that of C. C. A. Christensen, whose solid and sensitive interpretations of church history still stand as the best of Mormon art. Writing in his diary during his student days in Copenhagen over a century ago, he remarked, "I looked forward to the day when I could be released from my apprenticeship and get promoted as a painter, not so much because I wanted material gain but because I wanted the liberty so I could work among my countrymen as a missionary. I knew that in many parts of my native country my people were in perfect ignorance as to the wonderful things the Lord had given to mankind in these latter days."



*ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ARTISTS*

*The following list includes not only the artists cited in the preceding article, but those as well who appeared in the exhibit "100 Years of Utah Painting," compiled by the author.*

- WILLIS A. ADAMS, 1854-1932  
GEORGE BEARD, 1855-1944  
DONALD BEAUREGARD, 1884-1914  
G. WESLEY BROWNING, 1868-1951  
ORSON D. CAMPBELL, 1876-1933  
MICHAEL RITER CANNON, 1913-  
CARL C. A. CHRISTENSEN, 1831-1912  
JOHN W. CLAWSON, 1858-1936  
GORDON N. COPE, 1906-  
HENRY L. A. CULMER, 1854-1914  
CYRUS E. DALLIN, 1861-1944  
GEORGE SMITH DIBBLE, 1904-  
ELBERT H. EASTMOND, 1876-1936  
KEITH EDDINGTON, 1923-  
MARTHA ESTUS, 1934-  
EDWIN EVANS, 1860-1946  
J. A. F. EVERETT, 1883-1945  
AVARD FAIRBANKS, 1897-  
JOHN B. FAIRBANKS, 1855-1940  
J. LEO FAIRBANKS, 1878-1946  
LYNN FAUSETT, 1894-  
WILLIAM DEAN FAUSETT, 1913-  
JOHN FERY, 1865-1934  
CALVIN FLETCHER, 1882-1963  
IRENE T. FLETCHER, 1900-  
MABEL P. FRAZER, 1887-  
HERMAN H. HAAG, 1871-1895  
JOHN HAFEN, 1856-1910  
ROSE HARTWELL,  
J. T. HARWOOD, 1860-1940  
PAUL HASEGAWA, 1927-  
SAMUEL H. JEPPELSON, 1855-1931  
JOSEPH KERBY, 1857-1911  
RANCH S. KIMBALL, 1894-  
REUBEN KIRKHAM, 1866-1886  
PETE LAFON, 1929-  
ALFRED LAMBOURNE, 1850-1926  
B. F. LARSEN, 1882-  
WARREN LUCH, 1937-  
PHYLLIS LUCH, 1935-  
WILLIAM WARNER MAJOR, 1804-1854  
SHERMAN MARTIN, 1928-  
EDWARD MARYON, 1931-  
WALDO MIDGLEY, 1888-  
KEITH MONTAGUE, 1921-  
HENRI MOSER, 1876-1951  
TED NAGATA, 1935-  
GEORGE M. OTTINGER, 1833-1917  
HERMAN PALMER  
WILLIAM J. PARKINSON, 1899-  
E. W. PERRY, JR., 1831-1915  
LORUS PRATT, 1855-1923  
GERALD PURDY, 1930-  
LEWIS A. RAMSEY, 1875-1941  
RALPH RAMSEY, 1824-1905  
H. REUBEN REYNOLDS, 1898-  
RALPH REYNOLDS, 1916-  
LEE GREENE RICHARDS, 1878-1950  
DAVID H. ROSENBAUM, JR., 1908-  
CORNELIUS SALISBURY, 1882-  
ROSINE HOWARD SALISBURY, 1887-  
MYRA LOUISE SAWYER, d. 1956  
F. ANTHONY SMITH, 1939-  
RUTH WOLF SMITH, 1912-  
S. PAUL SMITH, 1904-  
V. DOUGLAS SNOW, 1927-  
NATHANIEL SPENS, 1838-1916  
HARRY SQUIRES, 1850-1928  
LAWRENCE SQUIRES, 1887-1928  
JOHN HEBER STANSFIELD, 1878-1953  
LECONTE STEWART, 1891-  
MARY TEASDEL, 1863-1937  
EVERETT CLARK THORPE, 1907-  
JOHN TULLIDGE, 1836-1899  
FLORENCE WARE, 1891-  
DANQUART A. WEGGLAND, 1827-1918  
ALMA B. WRIGHT, 1875-1952  
MAHONRI M. YOUNG, 1877-1957  
PHINEAS HOWE YOUNG, 1847-1868  
FRANK ZIMBEAUX, 1861-1935