

With thanks to Lisa Greenberg for the following biographical sketch:

Gertrude Horsford Fiske was a prominent member of the Boston School which dominated the local art scene during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Committed to ideals of craftsmanship and beauty, it was comprised of an informal group of painters and sculptors who exhibited regularly at the Guild of Boston Artists. Its leading members - Frank W. Benson, Edmund C. Tarbell and Philip L. Hale, taught at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts where they trained a generation of artists among them Gertrude Fiske.

Born into a wealthy Boston family, Gertrude Fiske was free to pursue her desire to become an artist. She lived at “Stadhaugh”, the Fiske family estate in Weston where she painted in a large studio on the top floor of the barn. Like so many other genteel families of her era, the Fiskes summered on Cape Cod and spent the winter at their home on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston. In 1904, she entered the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at the age of 26 and was among a small group of students to complete their seven year program. Students at the Museum School learned to value careful modeling, accurate rendering of effects of light and harmonious composition – hallmarks of what became known as the Boston School. In addition to her studies at the Museum School, she took classes with Charles Woodbury during the summer in Ogunquit, Maine. Woodbury’s bold, painterly style balanced the more traditional training she received at the Museum School and would have a lasting effect on her work.

Her early work is very much indebted to the training she received under Edmund C. Tarbell and Frank W. Benson. These light filled impressionist paintings earned her favorable reviews. Shortly after her first solo show at the Guild in 1916, she began to push her work in new directions experimenting with compressed, truncated compositions and modern subject matter. By 1920, she had developed a style very much independent of her mentors and the Boston School. Despite the increasingly modern nature of her work, Fiske remained a member of the Guild, of which she was a charter member, until 1942, holding at least six solo shows there. Beginning as early as 1913, Fiske maintained a studio in Boston’s Back Bay where she came into contact with the city’s other leading artists. In addition to being a founding member of the Guild, she founded the Ogunquit Art Association with her teacher Charles Woodbury as well as the Concord Art Association. She was also one of the original members and chairman of the Weston Historical Committee, later known as the Weston Historical Society.