

HURD OBJECT LABELS

Legend of Ingham Spring, 1929

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Delaware Art Museum, Gift of Doctor H. Craig Bell, 1989.

An ambitious example of Hurd's early work, this painting of an artesian spring located near New Hope, Pennsylvania, is a luminous depiction of an autumnal forest, with the red foliage of the central tree appearing to glow in the sunlight. As in many of his landscapes, Hurd has provided anecdotal detail by including a human figure, in this instance an American Indian hunter carrying a deer. Formerly used by the Lenni Lenape Indians, Ingham Spring, also known as Aquetong, has had several legends associated with it. One of these narratives describes three young hunters chasing a deer into one natural spring known as Konkey Hole, only to have the animal mysteriously emerge uninjured out of Ingham Spring, located three miles away.

Title Page, The Story of Roland, c. 1930

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Brandywine River Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Merrill Ford.

While Hurd may have concluded that his artistic voice lay in New Mexico, his professional and personal life remained in Pennsylvania during the early 1930s. With a growing family to support, first with son Peter born in 1930, followed by daughter Ann Carol in 1935, Hurd took on illustration assignments for books such as *The Story of Roland*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and the pirate anthology *Marauders of the Sea*. The illustrations he completed during this period emulate the work of N.C. Wyeth in both subject and style, with Hurd often depicting adventurous or historical stories. This particular illustration was designed as the title page for a retelling of the medieval epic poem *The Song of Roland*.

Tom Encounters a Newcomer, 1931

Oil on canvas

Collection of Christina and Steven Graham.

This illustration depicts a scene from the first chapter of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, when Tom meets Alfred Temple, a well-dressed but conceited boy. After exchanging a series of insults, the two wrestle, with Tom eventually overcoming Alfred. Rather than show the climactic wrestling match itself, Hurd depicts the tension building up to the fight, with the two boys glaring at each other while clenching their hands into fists. *Tom Sawyer* is one of several books Hurd illustrated during the late 1920s and early 1930s that is geared toward young male readers in particular, with other examples including *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Story of Roland*, and *Marauders of the Sea*.

The Discovery of the Trail (from *The Last of the Mohicans*), 1928

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Museum of Texas Tech University, Gift of the Diamond M. Foundation.

In 1928, Hurd painted a series of illustrations for a new edition of *The Last of the Mohicans*, a subject that N.C. Wyeth had painted nearly ten years earlier in 1919. Like his mentor, Hurd would feature action-oriented scenes in his early illustrations, as well as quieter moments of tension that encourage readers to anticipate upcoming events, as is the case with *The Discovery of the Trail*. While Hurd enjoyed the compositional challenges his illustration assignments offered, he also worried that he would be perceived as a little more than a Wyeth imitator. He often expressed this concern to his friend Paul Horgan, writing that his works “show a Wyethian trend which, paradoxically, makes them right in every detail but the signatures! This is not the way I want to paint and I weary of the present which seems to hold little else.” For Hurd, painting a different region or subject seemed the most effective way of asserting an independent voice, one he would achieve through his focus on southwestern subject matter.

N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945)

The Battle of Glen Falls, 1919

Oil on canvas

Brandywine River Museum of Art, Bequest of Mrs. Russell G. Colt.

First published in 1826, *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper is a historical novel set during the Seven Years’ War, when France and Great Britain vied for control over North America. N.C. Wyeth had been commissioned by the New York publisher Charles Scriber’s Sons to illustrate the work in 1919. As with many of his illustrations, *The Battle of Glen Falls* highlights his ability to create dynamic compositions that capture a story’s action while remaining strong visual works in their own right. Nearly a decade later, his student Peter Hurd would paint his own interpretation of *The Last of the Mohicans*, this time published by David McKay in Philadelphia in 1928.

Praxedes Dominguez, 1929

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Family of Peggy (Praxedes) Dominguez.

Among the first expressions of Hurd’s artistic independence are the portraits he painted in 1929 of Hispanic Roswell residents. While these works are conventional studio portraits, they exude an individuality and dignity rarely present in depictions of Hispanic people by white artists during this time. Having grown up near Roswell’s Hispanic district, Chihuahita, Hurd had become fluent in Spanish through his friendships with the residents there, and demonstrated a lifelong appreciation for New Mexico’s Spanish culture. Hurd would paint

Hispanic sitters such as ranch hands or neighbors throughout his career, usually in between commissioned portraits.

Praxedes Dominguez, the subject of this painting, was the daughter of the gardener who worked for Hurd's father. Hurd painted her shortly after his marriage to Wyeth in June 1929, while the newlyweds stayed with his parents during the first part of their honeymoon. Wyeth had contemplated painting Praxedes before Hurd decided to do so, describing her in a letter to her sister Ann as having "heavy black hair, parted down the middle and braided down her back in a long pigtail." Wyeth also mentions a doll that the girl regularly carried around with her, which Hurd has included in the portrait.

Uncle John, 1930

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Museum of Texas Tech University.

John McVey was a neighbor and favorite model among the Wyeths. As Hurd recalled later in life, "He posed for nearly all of the family at one time or another—N.C. Wyeth, his daughter Carolyn, son Andrew, and myself. Only my wife Henriette seemed impervious to his attraction." In addition to *Uncle John*, Hurd painted at least one other portrait of McVey, and also features him in a painting called *Blowing Sands*. Both works are on view in this exhibition.

John McVey, 1929

Oil on canvas

Brandywine River Museum of Art, Bequest of Carolyn Wyeth.

Although Hurd rarely worked in still life beyond study purposes, he did occasionally incorporate them into his portraits. In this painting of neighbor John McVey, Hurd pairs different textures to add visual interest, from the ceramic gleam of the stoneware whiskey jug, to the reflective, transparent glass containing McVey's drink, to finally the blue gingham tablecloth.

John McCoy (1910–1989)

Jimmy, 1934

Oil on panel

Brandywine River Museum of Art,

Gift of Anna B. McCoy in honor of Frolic Weymouth's vision.

Like Peter Hurd, John McCoy married into the Wyeth family, in this instance Henriette's younger sister, musician and composer Ann Wyeth. *Jimmy*, a portrait of a Chadds Ford

handyman, highlights the shared influences within the Wyeth family circle. The beaver hat and vest that Jimmy wears, for instance, belonged to N.C. Wyeth, who collected costumes for his illustration work. Jimmy would also appear in the same fanciful garb in a 1936 lithograph by Hurd, *Pennsylvania Quaker*.

Born in California, McCoy relocated with his family first to New Jersey, then to Wilmington, Delaware. After studying at Cornell University and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, he became a private student of N.C. Wyeth. McCoy worked in a variety of media, including oil, egg tempera, and watercolor, creating portraits and landscapes based on the Brandywine River Valley and the Maine coast.

Don Rosario Ortega, 1929

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hurd.

Painted in the same year as *Praxedes Dominguez*, *Don Rosario Ortega* is another example of Hurd asserting his own creative voice, which he expressed through his depictions of Roswell's landscapes and residents. Dressed in weathered yet presentable clothes, Don Rosario Ortega looks at the viewer from a three-quarter pose, his unaffected posture and direct eye contact emphasizing his presence as an individual.

Hurd's sojourn in New Mexico between 1928 and 1929 was seminal to his artistic development. By painting the people and places of the Southwest, he had found a way to embrace the teachings of N.C. Wyeth while expressing his own artistic voice. Hurd articulated his self-discovery to Henriette Wyeth in January 1929, writing that "...to realize that dream of mine, which is to become one of the American Painters, I must know this my homeland in its every mood and prismatic variation."

Study for NMMI Mural, c. 1934-1935

Charcoal on paper

Hurd La Rinconada Gallery.

In 1932, Hurd seized an opportunity to return to the Southwest when he received a commission to paint a series of murals at the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) in Roswell, which he had attended as a cadet. Between the summers of 1933 and 1936, he completed six different scenes commemorating New Mexico's history and multicultural heritage. Although the murals were destroyed by fire in 1939 and never repainted, they left a profound impact on Hurd's career, as he used his earnings from the project to purchase what would become his home and artistic hub in New Mexico, Sentinel Ranch.

This drawing is a figure study for a scene depicting the death of Diego de Vargas, one of New Mexico's Spanish territorial governors. With the exception of De Vargas himself, Hurd used local Hispanic residents as models for the work. Hurd considered this scene especially crucial

because he regarded it as the culmination of his artistic development up to that point, writing to Henriette in 1935 that it embodied "a marvelous opportunity, you know—really worthy of the greatest of Giotto, Cimabue, Uccello. It must be sonorous, deep sounding with—by some magic I can only hope for, *the feeling of the moment.*"

The New Mill, c. 1935

Egg tempera on compressed board

Collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, presented by Mrs. Thomas E. Drake.

Windmills serve a critical role in southwestern ranching, using wind power to pump groundwater located deep below the Earth's surface. Hurd had grown up around windmills, and they would appear throughout his southwestern oeuvre, with the artist keeping a smaller replica in his studio for easy reference. During the 1930s and 1940s in particular, he completed several paintings and prints of men erecting or repairing windmills, works that highlight the collaborative nature of ranch life. Hurd understood and appreciated the importance of teamwork through the years he spent renovating Sentinel Ranch, with neighbors and workers helping him complete various projects.

The Dry River, 1938

Egg tempera on panel

Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Longwell.

Completed in 1938, *The Dry River* exemplifies both the hilly terrain surrounding San Patricio, and Hurd's interest in New Mexico's different atmospheric conditions. Golden sunlight outlines the landscape's rolling hills, complementing the purplish-gray rainclouds. Crisp details such as the rocks in the riverbed emphasize the almost unearthly clarity of the arid Southwest. The man riding on horseback along the bottom edge, a representation of Hurd's neighbor Don Pamino Gonzales, provides anecdotal detail.

Prior to their marriage, Hurd had considered moving to Santa Fe so that Wyeth could associate with the artistic circles there. He strongly disliked the Santa Fe art scene, however, and opted to settle in southeastern New Mexico instead. Here he would create his own artistic hub at Sentinel Ranch and distinguish himself from his New Mexico contemporaries by painting a part of the state that had historically received little artistic attention.

Polo Game, 1938

Egg tempera on panel

Collection of the Phoenix Art Museum, Gift of Clare Boothe Luce

Hurd learned to play polo as part of the equestrian program at the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, where he had been a cadet. The game remained one of his favorite pastimes throughout his life. He had a polo field constructed at Sentinel Ranch and formed his own team, which often played against the cadets at NMMI. He also wrote about the sport for

regional publications, and had this painting published as part of his first feature in *Life* magazine, which appeared in the July 24, 1939 issue. He painted this scene over several consecutive weekends, when he could observe matches firsthand.

Blowing Sands, by 1939

Egg tempera on panel

Dallas Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Marcus.

Hurd occasionally created paintings based on earlier lithographs, enabling him to revisit previous subjects in a different medium. He initially began exploring lithography in response to the Depression-era demand for affordable artwork, but developed an appreciation for the medium's affinity with drawing, creating more than fifty prints during the 1930s and 1940s. He worked on stones in both the Northeast and Southwest, but printed nearly all of his work in Pennsylvania in collaboration with lithographer Theodore Cuno.

Blowing Sands takes inspiration from *The Old Homesteader*, which had been printed a few years earlier around 1935. Taking inspiration from Hurd's childhood memories in Roswell, the print reflects on early 20th-century homesteading practices and the depletion of water resources in southeast New Mexico, a phenomenon that undoubtedly resonated with Dust Bowl-era audiences.

Grading Tobacco, 1943

Egg tempera on board

Private collection.

Whereas Hurd's earlier illustrations emulated the work of N.C. Wyeth in both subject and style, by the 1940s he focused on contemporary scenes, or western American topics when clients requested historical material. This painting, an advertisement for Lucky Strike, originated from a campaign inviting contemporary artists to showcase the company's tobacco. Based on first hand observations made in the Carolinas, Hurd's contribution highlights a rural way of life not unlike his New Mexico ranch scenes. In keeping with Lucky Strike's requirement that tobacco be the focal point, Hurd shows the man holding up a leaf and stretching it at the corners to test its quality. The true focus of the painting, however, is Hurd's rendering of light as it filters through the leaves and reflects off the seated woman's hair.

Westbound Freight, c. 1945

Watercolor on paper

Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Winston.

Hurd had worked periodically with watercolor since at least the 1920s, but he began using it more seriously during World War II. In need of a more portable alternative to egg tempera for his second tour as a war art correspondent, Hurd began practicing in watercolor under the tutelage of his brother-in-law, Andrew Wyeth. After the war, he continued using the medium

for studies as well as for larger, finished paintings such as *Westbound Freight*, a depiction of the train station in Carrizozo, a small town located about forty-five miles away from Hurd's home in San Patricio. Often featuring energetic brushwork with details rendered in pen-and-ink, Hurd's watercolors became a more gestural foil to his egg tempera paintings.

Cerro San Patricio, c. 1940–1950
Pen and wash
Hurd La Rinconada Gallery.

Hurd created numerous studies for his landscapes. He often started his works with small watercolor or ink wash sketches made *en plein air* to record specific light effects that he could reference later. From these intimate studies, he created larger drawings or cartoons that refined the composition. Finished paintings would be completed in the studio. In comparison to his finished works, studies such as this one often have a more informal character, with Hurd readily embracing the mark-making qualities of pen and ink to create form.

The Oasis, 1945
Egg tempera on panel
Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Winston.

Inspired by childhood memories and using Roswell residents as models, *The Oasis* reflects on the pleasures of swimming in a cool water tank on a hot summer's day. Like many of Hurd's paintings, the action is subdued, with the windmill in the center grounding the composition. An abundance of reflected light gives the painting a glowing quality, with strokes of red, yellow, and even turquoise appearing in the windmill blades.

This painting appeared in the August 18, 1947 issue of *Life*, as part of an illustrated article on modern irrigation. In one of the following issues of the magazine, different Letters to the Editor commented on the painting. The work puzzled readers because the windmill's stillness implied the absence of a breeze, but the pipe at the base of the mill is still pumping water, suggesting a discrepancy. The readership's concern was so great that Hurd responded with a letter of his own, explaining that although the wind has stopped, the water is still pumping out because it has not yet finished flowing through the 30 inches of pipe behind the spout.

A Ranch on the Plain, c. 1954
Egg tempera on hardboard
Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Gift of the California Brewing Company.

Many of Hurd's southwestern paintings take inspiration from two different regions in southeast New Mexico: Roswell, where he had grown up, and San Patricio, the site of his home at Sentinel Ranch. Whereas the landscapes done around San Patricio are recognized for their

rolling hills, Roswell paintings such as *A Ranch on the Plain* feature flat, expansive vistas punctuated by a singular mountain known as El Capitan. The mountain was one of Hurd's earliest childhood memories, and appears prominently in most of his Roswell scenes.

Eve of St. John, 1960

Egg tempera on board

Collection of the San Diego Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norton S. Walbridge.

The model for this painting is Dorothy Herrera, the daughter of Jose Herrera, Sentinel Ranch's foreman for over twenty years. Dorothy's sitting lasted about three weeks, with Hurd having her hold lit candles throughout the process. Pairing a cool twilight sky with the warm glow of the burning candle, the painting emphasizes Hurd's ongoing fascination with different light effects, while Dorothy's introspective pose gives the scene a particularly evocative quality. Enhancing the painting's mysterious aura is its title, as there is no Eve of St. John on the Catholic calendar. Rather, Hurd is likely referencing the feast day for Saint John the Baptist, which takes place on June 24.

Last Escape of Billy the Kid, c. 1965

Egg tempera on board

Collection of the Fred Jones Museum, University of Oklahoma, Gift of Eugene B. Adkins.

While many of Hurd's southwestern works focus on contemporary New Mexico, he also painted historical subjects such as this imagining of William Bonney, better known as Billy the Kid. From the late 1870s until his death in 1881, Bonney was involved in several conflicts, thefts, and murders. The most infamous of these activities was a series of gang-related outbreaks known as the Lincoln County War, which took place in 1879 in the small community of Lincoln, located a few miles from Hurd's home in San Patricio. Billy the Kid remains a popular figure in New Mexico history and folklore. Every summer, for instance, the town of Lincoln performs a reenactment of his 1881 escape from the town's jail and courthouse, with Hurd himself actually playing the Kid during the 1940s.

Shower in a Dry Year, 1969

Egg tempera on panel

Albuquerque Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1985 General Obligation.

Late in his career Hurd revisited some of his earlier paintings in works such as *Shower in a Dry Year*, a reworking of *The Dry River*, painted more than thirty years earlier in 1938. Though the subject matter is identical in both works, right down to the man on horseback along the bottom edge, there are subtle differences, such as a greater number of shrubs in the 1969 version.

Hurd had also begun working on securing his regional legacy as a New Mexico artist. In 1968, his friend and assistant John Meigs published a book on Hurd's lithographs, and in 1971, another volume on his New Mexico watercolor sketches appeared. Hurd also began putting together an autobiography, although this work would remain unfinished. A diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease would put an end to his creative work, but his reputation had already been secured. By the time of his death in 1984, Hurd had become synonymous with New Mexico, with his obituary in the *New York Times* entitled, "Peter Hurd, Painter of Southwest."

Enemy Action over American Bomber Station, 1942

Egg tempera on board

Army Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, VA.

This painting shows Hurd's predilection for painting light effects and clouds at different times of day. Here he captures the dramatic, otherworldly effect of chandelier flares falling from the *Luftwaffe*, the aerial branch of Germany's military, as searchlights crisscross the cloudy sky at sunset.

From the Navigator's Window of a Flying Fortress, 1942

Egg tempera on board

Army Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, VA.

From the Navigator's Window is a clever play on Italian Renaissance artist and art theorist Leon Battista Alberti's famous prescription to treat the frame of a painting as a window. Here Hurd uses the border of the plane's window to frame a scene of a bomber flying through clouds over a colorful field below. He also creates a dynamic composition by replicating the colors and forms of the field in the map, and employs typical portrait conventions, placing the tools of the navigator's trade in the foreground.

The Return from a Raid over Rouen, 1942

Egg tempera on board

Army Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, VA.

Thirty Thousand Feet Up, 1942

Egg tempera on board

Army Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, VA.

Lt. Carl E. Schultz, Bombardier, 1942

Egg tempera on board

Army Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, VA.

Hurd did a series of portraits of US airmen, which were highlighted in a 1943 *Life* article. The article reprinted Hurd's reflections on his time with the airmen: "Now, sitting here in the New Mexico sun, my experiences with these boys suddenly seem remote in time as well as in distance. They seem like a band of legendary heroes, although I know well that they themselves would be the first to scoff at such an idea. All in all, it was the biggest adventure I have ever had—living the life of constant adventure that is the life on a bomber station."

Hurd continued, soberly describing his sitters: "They have the look of veterans, these youngsters in their late teens or early twenties. United in their sense of purpose, they have looked death in the face repeatedly and unflinchingly...One thing was quickly apparent as I got to know them well. There is no norm for a flier. They are of many types and classes and seem to have in common only courage, a love for flying and above all a belief in America's future as a free nation."

You Are a Waist-Gunner (English Landscape from a Flying Fortress), 1942

Egg tempera on board

Army Art Collection, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir, VA.

[harbor haze]

Untitled (Landscape Near the Charles River, Massachusetts), 1927

Watercolor on paper

Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Dr. & Mrs. Stephen B. Berstein.

Although Hurd would later assert that he did not work with watercolor in earnest until the 1940s under the tutelage of his brother-in-law, Andrew Wyeth, this early landscape demonstrates that he did experiment with the medium as early as the 1920s. Hurd also did pen and ink sketches as studies for lithographs and paintings, and illustrated Paul Horgan's 1939 book, *The Habit of Empire*, with ink wash drawings. Intriguingly, Hurd also used watercolor as an analogy for describing gesso panels, writing to Horgan in 1933 that "this new technique...combines all the brilliance of watercolour."

Pennsylvania Landscape, c. 1927

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Dwight Starr Estate.

By the late 1920s, Hurd had developed sufficiently as an illustrator to begin accepting N.C. Wyeth's overflow assignments. When he wasn't working on these projects, he painted landscapes of the Chadds Ford region. Like his teacher, Hurd looked to his local environs for artistic inspiration, a practice that would define his New Mexico work. In *Pennsylvania Landscape*, he demonstrates an interest in light and atmospheric effects, with sunlight filtering down through cumulus clouds and casting shadows across the sky. Hurd would refine his depiction of light in his southwestern work, making it one of the hallmarks of his mature painting.

Untitled (Pennsylvania Landscape), 1928

Pencil on paper

Hurd La Rinconada Gallery

Forsythe Farm, c. 1930

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Somerville Manning Gallery.

While Hurd may have concluded that his artistic voice lay in New Mexico, his professional and personal life largely remained in the Northeast during the early 1930s. With a growing family to support, first with son Peter born in 1930, followed by daughter Ann Carol in 1935, Hurd accepted illustration assignments and continued making paintings inspired by his Pennsylvania environs. When not painting, he maintained his equestrian skills through foxhunting, and cared for his neighbors' horses to offset his expenses. He admitted to his friend Paul Horgan that life in the Chadds Ford area was not unpleasant, writing in December 1929, "I'm not

apostate to N. Mexico but here I enjoy the country for its lush opulence—the feeling of security and safety, a feeling that here the struggle for existence is reduced."

N.C. Wyeth (1882–1945)

Uncle John McVey, c. 1928

Oil on canvas

Andrew and Betsy Wyeth Collection.

Members of the Wyeth family circle often used the same models in their work, giving their own interpretations to each sitter. John McVey, a neighbor of the Wyeths, was an especially popular model. Here, N.C. Wyeth has placed McVey in a Chadds Ford landscape, blurring his facial features in order to integrate him into his broader surroundings. The rhythmic canvas, with its almost prismatic palette and expressive brushwork, reflects Wyeth's ongoing experimentations with abstraction during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and is reminiscent of Henriette Wyeth's fantasies of the same period.

Windmill and Tank, c. 1930

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Paul Horgan.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Hurd tried different painting styles in his effort to establish a unique artistic voice. In paintings such as *Windmill and Tank*, he experimented with a highly textural, expressive approach to oil painting. Loading up the brush with multiple colors, he applied his paint using rhythmic zig-zags and other patterns to give his work an energetic, almost Van Gogh-esque quality. Hurd abandoned this style after he began painting in egg tempera, though he would occasionally continue to work in oil during the 1930s. As a painter, Hurd came to prefer the flat, wooden panels traditionally used for egg tempera over textured canvas because they enabled him to paint with greater detail and clarity.

Windmill, c. 1934

Oil on panel

Brandywine River Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wyeth.

While egg tempera would become Hurd's preferred medium, he did not immediately abandon oil painting. When he first began painting on gesso panels in the early 1930s, he used oil paint, discovering egg tempera shortly thereafter. After Hurd started using tempera, he continued to occasionally employ oil for the remainder of the 1930s. For this oil painting, Hurd uses bright colors such as yellow and green to suggest the reflected light coming off the ranch field, a technique he would revisit in his 1945 egg tempera painting, *The Oasis*.

Although New Mexico had become Hurd's primary creative focus, he commuted between the Northeast and Southwest through the 1930s. With Wyeth hesitant to commit to New Mexico

completely, Hurd remained suspended between two places, painting one while living in the other. He described his conflicted emotions in a 1936 letter to Henriette, writing, “I wish there wasn’t this terrible conflict inside of me for love of this land and love for *You*—The only possible comfort (and scant that it is) is that perhaps the two feelings may engender something really worthwhile in my work.”

Hoffman’s Mill, c. 1930

Oil on canvas

Brandywine River Museum of Art, Gift of Clement R. Hoopes.

El Mocho, 1936

Egg tempera on panel

Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, Watson F. Blair Purchase Prize.

Painted in Hurd’s kitchen at Sentinel Ranch, *El Mocho* is a portrait of ranch hand Carlos Miranda. Spanish for “the armless one,” *el mocho* was a nickname for Miranda, who had lost one of his hands in a car accident. According to Hurd, this work was especially challenging to paint because the kitchen was always occupied with visitors and ranch workers, writing afterwards that “they sang songs, swilled wine, and twanged guitars by the hour. The only thing that made it supportable in the least was that *Mocho*, who had no love for sitting for his portrait, was kept entertained.”

As one of Hurd’s earliest egg tempera portraits, *El Mocho* demonstrates a diverse range of brushwork and mark-making, as Hurd experimented with the medium to learn its visual qualities. *El Mocho* would go on to win the annual Acquisition Prize at the Art Institute of Chicago, becoming part of its permanent collection.

Boy from the Plains, 1939

Egg tempera on board

Collection of the Neuberger Museum.

Between the late 1920s and early 1930s Hurd innovated with his portrait format by placing his sitters in outdoor settings, linking them with their local environment. He used this formula for the rest of his career, with the San Patricio landscape surrounding his home at Sentinel Ranch becoming one of his most frequent settings.

Earl Wagner, the subject of this portrait, was the son of Hurd’s crop tenant. Shown in profile, Wagner’s pose recalls outdoor portraits by such Italian Renaissance painters as Pisanello and

Piero della Francesca. Hurd told *Life* that he painted Wagner because his sun-worn clothes and tan face interested him visually, but he also admired the youth's equestrian skills, stating that he "rides like a Centaur." The work received significant attention. Roy Neuberger remembered this acquisition as one of his first important purchases, and the portrait was published in the July 24, 1939 issue of *Life* as part of an article on Hurd's activities at Sentinel Ranch.

Portrait of Peggy, 1948

Egg tempera on panel

Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Winston.

As Hurd's work gained national attention through *Life* and other publications, his portrait sitters began to include movie stars and other celebrities. *Portrait of Peggy* depicts Irish actress Peggy Cummins, best remembered today for her role as a femme fatale in the 1950 *film noir* drama *Gun Crazy*, the story of a young married couple on a deadly crime spree. As one of Hurd's most refined portraits, this painting demonstrates the gradual tightening of his style as he continued working in egg tempera. Delicate, hatched brushstrokes give Peggy's face a luminous appearance, while the lack of hard outlines around her eyes and mouth emphasize her soft features. The long, thin brushstrokes of her blonde hair reflect both sunlight and the green of her jacket, underscoring Hurd's interest in subtle light effects.

Portrait of Gerald Marr, 1952

Egg tempera on gesso and Masonite

The Collection of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, Percy Hagerman Memorial Fund, FA.

Gerald Marr was a 15-year-old rodeo champion at the time this portrait was painted. The winner of the all-around junior title at the Billy the Kid Rodeo in Lincoln, New Mexico, Marr had won a trip to New York City, a new saddle, and the opportunity to have Hurd paint his portrait.

Duke Ellington, 1956

Egg tempera on board

Collection of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of *Time* Magazine.

Hurd painted this portrait of musician, composer, and bandleader Duke Ellington for the August 20, 1956 cover of *Time* magazine, which appeared shortly after Ellington's seminal concert at the Newport Jazz Festival on July 7, 1956. As one of the first major jazz festivals of its kind, the Newport concert and subsequent live album revitalized Ellington's career, which had lagged with the end of the Big Band era in the late 1940s. As with many of his portraits,

Hurd has painted two representations of the sitter: a static image in the foreground, and an active pose in the background to indicate the sitter's interests or occupation. The sketches shown next to the portrait are typical of the studies Hurd made in preparation for finished works.

Duke Ellington (Studies), c. 1956
Pencil, ink, watercolor on paper
Hurd La Rinconada Gallery.

Parry O'Brien, 1956
Egg tempera on Masonite
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of *Time* magazine.

Parry O'Brien was a champion shot put player, a track and field event in which competitors throw heavy, spherical objects as far as possible. He competed in four consecutive Summer Olympics tournaments, winning the gold medal in 1952 and 1956, and the silver in 1960. This portrait appeared on the cover of *Time* for December 3, 1956.

Peter Hurd and Henriette Wyeth
Portrait of Lyndon B. Johnson, 1964
Egg tempera on paper
Collection of the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of the Artist.

Hurd's most notorious celebrity portrait is his 1967 painting of President Lyndon B. Johnson, which had been commissioned as the official White House portrait but rejected by the president after its completion. While Johnson never fully disclosed why he disliked the work, cartoonists of the day speculated that he found it insufficiently flattering. Initially hurt by the rejection, Hurd accepted the resulting publicity and took the painting on a museum tour, ultimately donating it to the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC.

Although the portrait brought unexpected notoriety to Hurd, it was not his first time depicting the president. In a rare collaboration with Wyeth, Hurd painted this portrait in 1964, which shows Johnson in front of his birthplace in Stonewall, Texas. The painting would appear on the January 1, 1965 issue of *Time*, when Johnson was recognized as Man of the Year. Experiencing his pinnacle of political influence, Johnson had recently won the 1964 presidential election with a landslide victory, and during the previous year had worked with Congress to launch the most comprehensive civil rights legislation since the Civil War. While later decisions such as the escalation of US involvement in the Vietnam War proved detrimental to Johnson's legacy, this portrait captures him at the height of his popularity.

