



Edmund G. Schildknecht

Painter
American

Born: 1899 Chicago, Illinois
Died: 1985 Eastport, Maine

Edmund Schildknecht moved a few years after his birth with his family from Chicago to Milwaukee. There he began painting at age four when an aunt, an art teacher, gave him a box of paints. She encouraged him and so did a grandfather and uncle who also painted. He repaid this encouragement later by teaching art for thirty-two years at the Arsenal Technical Schools in Indianapolis, beginning 1924. His life and art were a matter of lessons learned and lessons taught.

Edmund Schildknecht's early goal was to be a portrait painter. After attending the Wisconsin School of Art in Milwaukee from 1917 to 1920, he spent the next year at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts receiving academic training in precise and self-effacing representation. There as he later reported, "I was using ochres and blacks... and one instructor ordered, "Fade these colors out." In 1923-24 he went to Paris with the family of one of his instructors, and there he saw the art that was to stimulate his later development, the art introduced to the United States by the Armory Show. He began painting in watercolors, as well as oils, and studied briefly at the Academe Julian and the Academie de la Grande Chaumiere. As he later recollected, "I worked a great deal on my own. Paris then was the city of Degas and Cézanne... of Picasso."

By 1929 he was teaching art in Indianapolis, showing successfully in the mid-West, and demonstrating in his oils and in an increasing number of watercolor landscapes the lessons he had learned abroad. He first summered in Eastport, Maine, in 1934, and settled there after retiring from teaching in 1957, where he remained until his death in 1985. The painting was acquired by the Art Collection in 1985, bequeathed by the artist along with twenty-three other paintings, and hundreds of prints and drawings. These follow a gift by Edmund Schildknecht of over one hundred of his paintings and almost four hundred of his watercolors.