

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 12, 2017

Inman Gallery is pleased to present

Dorothy Antoinette LaSelle
Paintings from 1946–1956

The Art Show 2017
Booth D14

Park Avenue Armory
Park Avenue and 67th Street
NY

March 1 – 5, 2017



Dorothy Antoinette LaSelle, ***Small Doxology, III***, 1956
oil on canvasboard, vintage frame, 10 x 8 inches

For the 2017 Art Show, Inman Gallery is pleased to present a solo booth of work by the under-recognized American Modernist **Dorothy Antoinette LaSelle** (1901-2002) from the pivotal decade in her long career, 1946–1956. Sponsored by the Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA), The Art Show is presented at the Park Avenue Armory, March 1-5, 2017, with a Gala preview on Tuesday February 28th, benefiting The Henry Street Settlement.

Dorothy Antoinette (Toni) LaSelle was born in Beatrice, Nebraska, in 1901. She earned a BA from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1923 and an MA from the University of Chicago in 1926. After several temporary teaching positions and a six month trip to study in England, Italy, and France, LaSelle accepted a position at Texas State College for Women (now Texas Women’s University), in Denton, Texas, in 1928. Although painting was her primary vocation, she remained at TSCW/TWU until her retirement in 1972, a dedicated teacher for 44 years.

LaSelle became conscious of the “moderns” in about 1922 through a professor who had been to the 1913 Armory Show, and focused her future studies on the Post-Impressionists, Cubists and Futurists. In her own words:

I didn’t know about the real focus of the moderns until I was a senior [at Nebraska Wesleyan University], which for me meant being startled by the difference in literal representational work by what I encountered in Cézanne, Gauguin and van Gogh, who dawned on me through one really good teacher who had seen the [1913] Armory show in New York that long ago. From that time on, I began to realize that to do representational work really stood for a time and thinking that really wasn’t in accord with the time in which I was living.

LaSelle recognized the influence of both Hans Hofmann and László Moholy-Nagy on her painting practice, which by the mid-1930s was resolutely abstract, a lonely activity in a region steeped in narrative and representational traditions. Nevertheless, in her role as a professor, she brought Moholy-Nagy to TWU to lecture and lead workshops, and she organized an exhibition of Hofmann’s work on campus.

In the summer of 1944, more than a decade after her first encounter with the work of Hans Hofmann, LaSelle enrolled at the Hofmann School in Provincetown. Hofmann and LaSelle connected on an artistic and personal level from the start. By 1944 LaSelle had more than a decade's experience in the classroom, and she immediately admired Hofmann not only for his skill as an artist, but for his skill as a teacher. It was Hofmann's pedagogy that she found inspiring; as she wrote to a friend, it was Hofmann's focus not on teaching an ideology or a school of painting but his "discernment" between each student's individual qualities that set him apart as a teacher. Her admiration may have been intensified by Hofmann's own admiration of LaSelle's painting. She had enrolled in the summer session to have contact with a master she revered, and Hofmann assured her she was on the right track. Over her many summers at the Hofmann School, LaSelle developed a close friendship with Hofmann and his wife Miz, and they carried on a correspondence until his death in 1966.

LaSelle had a particularly strong friendship with Myron Stout, an art teacher and artist she had met in Denton in the 1930s and who later had a career in New York. His frequent correspondence with LaSelle is full of stories about parties with other Hofmann students like Jan Muller and Robert Richenbourg, trips to see gallery shows of artists like Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, and meetings with influential gallerists and critics like Rose Fried and Clement Greenberg. Although LaSelle was living in Texas most of the year, she was a cherished part of this group, as evidenced by the many people who asked after her through Stout's correspondence.

LaSelle received some critical attention in her lifetime, with a solo exhibition at Rose Fried Gallery in NY in 1950, accompanied by an enthusiastic review in the NY Times, along with solo exhibitions at the Dallas Museum of Art (1948) and the Ft. Worth Art Center (now the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth) in 1959.

In her lifetime, two museums acquired LaSelle's work, the Dallas Museum of Art (1972) and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1995). Since her passing in 2002 at the age of 100, the Dallas Museum of Art and the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth have made significant acquisitions from the estate, and very recently, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston has selected five drawings to add to its collection.

In an interview given near the end of her life, LaSelle was asked when it was that she hit her stride as an artist:

When I confronted the things that bugged me. The first time was in the mood studies I did while I still was in school, self-portraits that were shown at the Renaissance Society in Chicago. The second time was in California, when I was studying sculpture. Then, finally, when I was studying the space-movement inherent in color structure. There are three aspects of my rounded-out awareness of what visual art requires, consciously and subconsciously. [...] Actually, I think it was in 1948 [actually 1950], when Rose Fried showed my work in New York, that I had a measuring rod to apply to myself. The day she looked at my work and said, "It's your own. You have arrived at this. I'll sell it." That was a great day for me.

Inman Gallery's 2017 Art Show booth will include paintings and selected drawings from 1946–1956, and included will be several paintings originally exhibited in the Rose Fried gallery show of 1950. We are very pleased to bring Ms. LaSelle's work back to New York 67 years after it first was presented here.



Photograph of Dorothy Antoinette LaSelle, used for the cover of her 1959 retrospective at the Ft. Worth Art Center

For more information please contact the gallery at 713-526-7800 or info@inmangallery.com