

The Sargent House Museum Among Six Institutions to Receive Works by Emily Sargent

Little-known sister of John Singer Sargent was a life-long watercolorist

GLOUCESTER, May 1, 2022 – The Sargent House Museum today announced acquisition of 15 watercolor paintings by Emily Sargent, a late 19th-early 20th century American artist and sister of famed portrait painter John Singer Sargent. The Sargent House Museum is one of six institutions including the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the Tate Gallery in London, and the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology at Oxford University, to receive the artworks in a distribution by the Sargent family.

Emily Sargent, born to American parents in Rome in 1857, painted throughout her lifetime but rarely exhibited. Much of her output was presumed lost after her death in 1936, but a cache of some 440 works was found in the attic of a Sargent family home more than 60 years after her death. Following the 1998 discovery, the works remained in family hands until the current distribution.

The Sargent House Museum's plans to exhibit the watercolors are now in progress and will likely include photographs, maps, letters and period costumes highlighting Emily Sargent's extensive travels through Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. These locations provided the inspiration for many of the newly acquired works, most of which date to the early decades of the 20th century.

"We are honored to have the opportunity to select paintings from this distribution and delighted with this gift of Emily Sargent works," said Amanda Hurd, past president of the Sargent House Museum board of directors and current chair of the collections committee. "The Emily Sargent works add an important component to our collections, and we look forward to sharing these beautiful watercolors with the public," Hurd said.

The current donation reflects a long-standing relationship with the Sargent family. In 1927 Emily Sargent donated three of her watercolors to the Museum; her sister Violet Sargent Ormond donated a fourth Emily Sargent watercolor the same year. Emily Sargent also donated her brother's portraits of their father, Dr. FitzWilliam Sargent, in 1924 and their mother, Mary Newbold Singer Sargent, in 1927. Charles Sprague Sargent donated a charcoal portrait of himself by his cousin John Singer Sargent in 1919, when the historic Sargent home became a museum.

The Sargent House Museum, a 1782 Georgian house overlooking Main Street in Gloucester, holds family portraits and sculptures; works by Fitz Henry Lane and others; New England furnishings dating to 1740; antique linens, decorative fabrics, clothing, and fine embroidery pieces; and housewares by Paul Revere and other well known early American silversmiths.

The Sargent House Museum shares its collections with the public in celebration of the house's original occupant, Judith Sargent Murray, an early advocate of women's rights. The Museum hosts tours of the house, walking tours of the historic downtown Gloucester neighborhood,

exhibits of works by emerging women artists of Cape Ann, and webinars on women's issues.
Go to sargenthouse.org for additional information.