



Impressionist painter Granville Redmond captured more than just poppies.

California gold

Granville Redmond's landscapes provide a window into California's forgotten past

BY PATRICK HYUN WILSON / patrickw@newsreview.com

"Alas," he writes, "people will not buy them. They all seem to want poppies," Granville Redmond said to Arthur Miller of the Los Angeles Times in 1931.

He may best be remembered for his paintings of the "Golden State" flower, but the California impressionist did much more than paint colorful landscapes laden with orange blossoms.

Now, in his first solo exhibition in more than 30 years, *The Eloquent Palette* will open at the Crocker Art Museum on Jan. 26 and will feature more than 80 works by Redmond, his largest show yet.

"He was certainly the best wildflower painter in their natural environments in California," says Scott Shields, Crocker's chief curator.

Redmond was born in Philadelphia in 1871. By 2 1/2 he lost his hearing to scarlet fever, and at 8 he was enrolled in what was called at the time, the California Institution for the Education of the Deaf, Dumb and Blind in Berkeley, where he began to study art. "He did his talking through his art, he would say," Shields says.

In 1890, Redmond left the Berkeley Institute and enrolled in classes at the California School of Design, and within three years left for Paris.

It was there that he painted "Matin d'Hiver," which depicts a simple barge floating on the Seine on a misty winter morning. The scene is ghostly and sparse, split

nearly in half by the horizon; each brick and ripple and distant purple building are applied with loose broad pigments. Above the horizon, the sky is transformed into a blanket of muted greens and grey.

Redmond stayed in Paris for two more years, obsessed with winning a prize at the Paris Salon, but he never did. He returned to California in 1898, destitute and depressed.

That same year, he opened his own studio in Los Angeles and began signing his pieces as Granville Redmond, marking a new direction in his life.

He painted across California through the early 20th century, beginning the work that he would become most recognized for—the California poppies.

His 1911 "Pond with Poppies" shows a small, undulating landscape dotted with a few short trees, some bushes and a blue pond. Though the trees and sky are painted with muted tones, a bright tract of golden yellow and orange wildflowers peeking over a tiny hill makes everything come alive on the canvas.

Redmond worked tirelessly painting the landscapes of California. They were not only an important part of the California Impressionist movement, but also testaments to the state's changes since his time.

In a 1920 painting of Catalina Island, heavy strokes of color create a picture of Sugarloaf Rock as a steamer pushes through the water. Like all of Redmond's work, the scene is sparse and impressionistic; the warm tones of the large land mass are solid and unmovable. You won't find Sugarloaf Rock in the real world anymore.

To make room for a new casino in 1928, gum industrialist William Wrigley had workers haul in dynamite to destroy the natural landmark, as it would have blocked views of the open ocean.

"You look at these paintings now, and you think how much has been lost in California," Shields says. "You look at Menlo Park and all those in San Jose, in Southern California, Los Angeles, and think, 'What is this landscape now?' It's a strip mall probably." □

The Eloquent Palette runs through May 17. The Crocker Art Museum, 216 O St. For more info, visit crockerart.org.



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5:30 PM DOCUMENTARY A | 8:00 PM DOCUMENTARY B

2/3 OSCAR SHORTS 2020

3:30 PM DOCUMENTARY A

6:00 PM ANIMATED | 8:30 PM LIVE ACTION

2/4 OSCAR SHORTS 2020

3:30 PM DOCUMENTARY B

6:00 PM LIVE ACTION | 9:00 PM ANIMATED

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