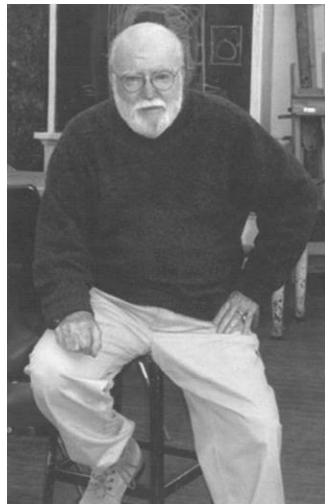


(Paul Zimmerman, University of Hartford website)



(West Hartford Art League)

**Paul Warren Zimmerman (1921-2007)**

“A Hartford Biography”

© Gary W. Knoble, 2015

Zimmerman came to Hartford in 1947, fresh out of art school to teach at the Hartford Art School for a couple of years. He ended up remaining in Hartford, teaching and painting for the next 60 years until his death in 2007. He painted hundreds of paintings in his small house in the South End of Hartford and taught hundreds of students at The Hartford Art School and the West Harford Art League.

Paul Warren Zimmerman was born in Toledo, Ohio on April 29, 1921. He was the son of Robert Frazee Zimmerman, a house painter, and Ethel Pearl Cramer Zimmerman. He grew up on the poor side of Kokomo, Indiana and as he told John LoPresti, a former student of his, "We didn't have a pot to pee in". He attended public school and graduated from the Kokomo High School in 1941. He obtained a scholarship to study art at the Herron School of Art and Design at the Indiana University in Indianapolis, Indiana where Henrik M. Mayer was one of his teachers. He obtained a BFA with honors in 1946 and received a scholarship from the Mary Milliken Memorial Fund, which enabled him to move to New York City. He spent the next year immersing himself in the culture of the city attending galleries, museums, concerts, and plays, with very little time left over for painting.

In 1946 his former teacher, Mayer, had moved to Hartford, Connecticut to become the Director of The Hartford Art School, then located in rooms at the Wadsworth Atheneum. Mayer invited Zimmerman to join him in Hartford to teach for two years at the art school as an Associate Professor. In the fall of 1947, Zimmerman began what turned out to be a more than 40 year long career at the art school, which in 1957, merged with the Hartt School of Music and Hillyer College to become the University of Hartford in 1959.

One of Zimmerman's first exhibitions in Hartford was at the Town and County Club in February 1948 where he participated in an exhibition of the teachers at the Hartford Art School including the Director Henrik Mayer.

The Connecticut Watercolor Society was one of the first art organizations Zimmerman became involved with in Hartford. Zimmerman was elected President of Society in 1952 and won prizes in 1952, 1953, 1954, and 1959. In 1963, when the Watercolor Society celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary Helen Perkins, in her history of the Society's first 25 years wrote: "*Paul Zimmerman was President in 1952-1953. He says 'The person of conservative taste in art tends to distrust the experimental point of view, but the conservative attitudes of today are in many cases the development of yesterday's experiments.'*"

His reputation as a painter as well as teacher grew rapidly. In 1956 the *Hartford Courant* reported that he had been invited to join the Seligmann Gallery in New York City. The *Courant* regularly reported on Zimmerman's shows at the Seligmann Gallery through the 50's, 60's, and 70's.

Zimmerman became an Associate of the National Academy of Design in 1959 and an Academician in 1972.

In 1977, the New Britain Museum of American Art featured Zimmerman in a solo show titled, "Paul Zimmerman, Recent Oils".

He was a prolific painter creating hundreds of paintings and watercolors throughout his life. Early in his career he painted many gritty street scenes, often in New Orleans. In the 60's and 70's he often painted colorful floral paintings. During the 80's he began to paint his signature landscape paintings which he continued to paint until the end of his life.

Two newspaper articles that appeared after his death provide a vivid picture of his studio. In 2013, Kristina Dorsay in *The Day* wrote: "*He lived in a small Cape Cod in the south end of Hartford, and he had built two additions off the back of the house. One was a sitting room with an end wall of glass so people inside could see his garden. The other wing was his studio.*"

An article in the *Hartford Courant* provided more detail: "*Vivian Zoë, director of Slater Memorial Museum in Norwich, remembers visiting Paul Zimmerman in his studio, which was inside his tiny house in Hartford's south end, a few years before he died. 'He had these corridors, and on both sides, stacked up, were framed watercolors. There were so many of them that all he had was a little alley in the center to walk through,' Zoe said. 'He was a chubby man and he would shimmy down that alley to get to his work space. The basement was loaded with paintings, too. When we came to take the paintings, there*

*were so many it was hard to see what we were taking,' she said. 'We just took everything and figured we would have time later to look at it.'"*

Zimmerman "retired" from the Hartford Art School in 1986, but continued to teach part time as Professor Emeritus for another 20 years. In 1994 a fund was created at the Art School in his name to provide teaching resources for the faculty and in 1999 a scholarship was created in his name to provide funds to students majoring in painting.

He won countless prizes and awards during his life starting with his scholarship to Herron in 1941 and the Mary Milliken Memorial Fund in 1946 that permitted him to spend a year in New York City. Among the other awards that continued to accumulate throughout his life were The Hallgarten Prize (1954); First Prize, Connecticut Watercolor Society; J.I. Holcomb Prize from the Herron Art Museum (1955); Second Prize at Chautauqua (1955); The Wallace Truman Prize (1956); Second Prize, Butler Art Institute (1958); The Gertrude Melcher Springer Prize at the Indiana Exhibition (1959); The Howard Penrose Award, Connecticut Academy (1959); Prize from Mystic Art Association (1960); The Patrick B. McGinnis Award, Berkshire Arts Festival (1961); The Salmagundi Club Prize from the National Academy (1962); Members Prize, Boston Arts Festival (1964); Third Prize, Kearney Memorial Regional Exhibition, Milwaukee, WI (1964); Benjamin Altman Prize for landscape from the National Academy (1969); Samuel Finley Breese Morse Medal from National Academy of Design (1972); the Best of Show, Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts, Hartford (1976); and many more.

Throughout his career the *Hartford Courant* regularly reported on his exhibitions, prizes, and other activities. T. H. Parker, the venerable critic for the *Hartford Courant*, was a major supporter.

After his retirement from The Hartford Art School he continued teaching part time at the Art School and at the West Hartford Art League until a year before his death.

He never married.

Zimmerman died on December 15, 2007 and is buried in the Cedar Hill Cemetery.

He was a long time friend of the Joseph Gualtieri, a fellow painter and long time Director of the Slater Museum in Norwich, Connecticut. He donated his collection of Oceanic art to the Slater where it remains on permanent display. He also donated all of the hundreds of paintings that were in his studio at the time of his death, to the Slater Museum to sell at auction for the benefit of the museum.

In 2008 the West Hartford Art League held a memorial exhibition titled, *"A Tribute to Paul Zimmerman"*. The website of The Hartford Art School contains many tributes to Zimmerman from his colleagues and former students. Power Boothe, the dean of the Art School at the time of Zimmerman's death wrote:

*"Paul once told me in his studio that he approached his work without knowing what was going to happen. Only after he got started, with accidents and scribbles from his brush — and from the memories he had absorbed from nature — a landscape would emerge, fully formed."*

*"After 40 years of teaching at the Hartford Art School he went on to teach at the West Hartford Art League, seemingly without a break year after year. His students were devoted to him and he was devoted to them. He was passionate about their growth and generous with his knowledge of art and life. We are all poorer for his death."*

Hartford Art School Associate Dean Tom Bradley said: *"Paul played a significant role in the development of generations of painters who studied at the Hartford Art School, maintaining contact with many of them long after their graduations. A prolific painter, he remained true to his personal artistic vision throughout his long distinguished career and continued to work in his studio, remain engaged in the artistic community and teach part-time throughout his retirement."*

Two auctions of Zimmerman's paintings were held at the Slater museum, the first in 2009 and the second in 2013. The first auction, which sold over 100 of his works, was accompanied by a memorial exhibition of his works entitled "Paul Zimmerman 1921-2007". A catalogue published for the auction included several more tributes to Zimmerman.

Vivian Zoe, Director of the Slater Museum wrote: *"Paul Zimmerman was a true Friend to the Slater Memorial Museum. The bequest of his entire oeuvre remaining in his studio was for the expressed purpose of auctioning it to benefit the Museum. Clearly he wanted the public to enjoy his work and the Museum to benefit from it as a result. Thousands of people around the state of Connecticut were touched by Paul and his work. They may have been his students or benefited from one of his open critique sessions. In each case, there is a warm memory of Paul Zimmerman and his reflections of Connecticut. The Slater Memorial Museum is also grateful to Joseph Gualtieri, Director of the Slater Museum from 1963 to 2001. He befriended Paul, engaged him, and planted the seed of this generous bequest."*

Bernard Hanson, former dean of The Hartford Art School, wrote: *"Through his long association with Connecticut and New England, Paul Zimmerman has absorbed the spirit of transcendental pantheism which so strongly moved Emerson and the world around him. He deals with seemingly simple elements in his paintings, but in such combination that the paintings themselves are extremely complex . . . he searches for a structure beneath the surface on which he can successfully construct a painting . He seeks to capture the reality beneath appearance."*

John LoPresti, a painter, former student of Zimmerman's, and a teacher at the West Hartford Art League wrote: *"Paul was an incredibly cultured man who built a first-rate art collection, a dedicated and serious teacher, a legendary curmudgeon and astute critic, and someone I was happy to call my friend."*

The second Slater Museum auction in 2013 was announced in the *Hartford Courant*, and was accompanied by an illustrated catalogue.

*"Fans of Connecticut en plein air work will be delighted by the selection, which includes renderings of verdant locations throughout the Hartford area: Bloomfield, Cromwell, Farmington, Lakeville, Simsbury, Madison, Glastonbury, Yalesville, Killingworth, Granby, Avon and Wethersfield."*

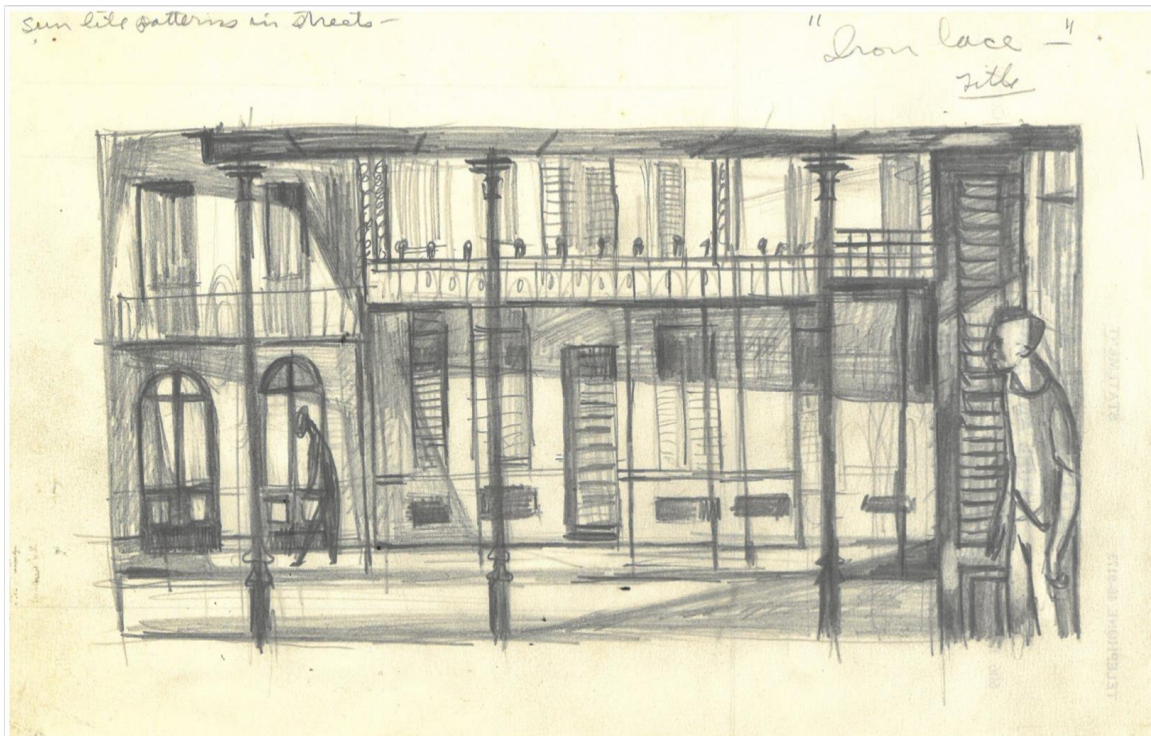
In 2009, Brick Walk Fine Art in West Hartford held an exhibition titled, "The Structure of Landscape Drawing".

His works are held in many public and private collections including: The Connecticut Academy of Fine Art, the Springfield Museum, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the New Britain Museum of American Art, the Slater Museum, Notre Dame University, Lehigh University, the First New Haven Bank of New Haven, and the United Technology Company.

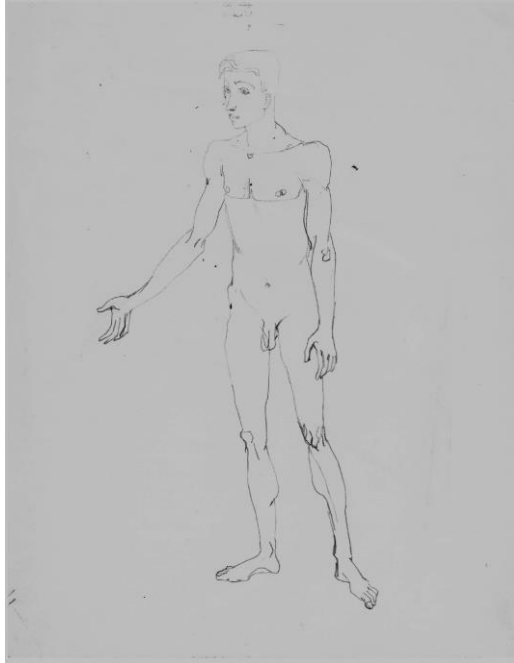
Dorsey, Kristina, *The Day*, "Slater Museum Auctions Paul Zimmerman Paintings", 1/11/2013  
*Hartford Courant*, "Auction of Late Paul Zimmerman Paintings at Slater Museum", 1/15/2003,  
4/24/1952, 7/24/1960, 2/26/1969, 3/3/1972  
*"In Memoriam: Paul W. Zimmerman"*, University of Hartford website, 2008  
*"Paul W. Zimmerman, Obituary"*, *Hartford Courant*, 12/29/2007  
*"Paul Warren Zimmerman, 1921-2007"*, Slater Museum  
*"Paul Zimmerman Recent Oils"*, NBMAA, 1977



Paul Zimmerman, *untitled, Iron Lace*, c.1940's, oil on board, 23" x 35"



Paul Zimmerman, *sketch for Iron Lace, Sunlight Patterns in Streets*, c.1940's, pencil on paper, 6 1/8" x 9 1/2"



Paul Zimmerman, sketch of nude boy, c. 1940's, pencil on paper, 8 ½" x 11"



Paul Zimmerman, *Tree, Cornwall, Connecticut*, oil on canvas, 30"x 36"



Paul Zimmerman, *Hartford Skyline*, 1958, oil on board, 12 ½"x29 ¼"



Paul Zimmerman, *Pears*, c. 1953, gouache on board, 7 5/8 x 19 1/4"



Paul Zimmerman, *Pears*, 1953  
NBMAA





Paul Zimmerman, *Study for Portrait of Paul Zimmerman*, 1950  
NBAA



Paul Zimmerman, *Tapestry Victoria*, 1988  
NBMAA