

Basic Detail Report



Title: Daisies

Date: 1925

Primary Maker: com.galleriesystems.emuseum.core.entities.RecordXPerson@3e1c7

Medium: Watercolor and graphite on wove paper

Description: Still-life subjects had long been a staple of traditional Pennsylvania German fraktur painting, and Demuth's grandmother Caroline and aunt Louisa were among the many amateur women theorem and watercolor painters in the region. As a child, Demuth painted flowers on teacups and made botanical studies in his sketchbooks. He executed his first mature still lifes in the mid-teens, inspired by the produce available at local markets and by flowers he picked himself. Demuth and his mother, Augusta, enjoyed gardening, and the plain colonial facade of their home on East King Street concealed lush plantings in the back, which he could see from his studio window. As critic Henry McBride observed: "The proper place for a Demuth

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flower, I sometimes think, is in the hands of an educated gardener--one who knows what a flower is and what an artist is." (1) The discipline of the modernist still life fascinated Demuth and other Precisionists, including O'Keeffe, Charles Sheeler, and Louis Lozowick. He carefully considered his compositions, quickly sketching his subjects on paper with pencil before adding watercolor washes. The result was a luminous surface achieved through a range of techniques, including blotting to increase the painterly effect and stiff pieces of paper to channel the paint into crisp lines. The bright colors and fluid lines of *Daisies* are typical of his mature work. Demuth's still lifes sold well throughout his career, and their purchase by leading collectors secured his reputation as one of America's most skilled modern watercolorists. BF Bibliography: Emily Farnham, *Charles Demuth: "Behind a Laughing Mask"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971); Thomas E. Norton, ed., *"Homage to Charles Demuth: Still Life Painter of Lancaster"* (Ephrata, Pa.: Science Press, 1978); Betsy Fahlman, *"Pennsylvania Modern: Charles Demuth of Lancaster,"* exhib. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1983); Barbara Haskell, *"Charles Demuth,"* exhib. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1987); Wanda M. Corn, *"In the American Grain: The Billboard Poetics of Charles Demuth"* Poughkeepsie: Vassar College, 1991). Notes: 1. Henry McBride, "Charles Demuth, Artist," *Magazine of Art* 31 (January 1938): 21. For the larger context of Demuth's flower still lifes, see Ella M. Foshay, *Reflections of Nature; Flowers in American Art* (New York: Knopf, 1984). Dimensions: 11 5/8 x 13 7/8 in. (29.5 x 35.3 cm)