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MARSDEN HARTLEY

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Lithographs and Related Works

The University of Kansas
Museum of Art
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THE LITHOGRAPHS OF MARSDEN HARTLEY

Since his death in 1943, Marsden Hartley's fame and importance have continued to grow, and today he is generally recognized as one of the leading American painters of the early twentieth century. An extremely prolific artist, his reputation rests on the hundreds of paintings and drawings produced in his lifetime, as well as upon his poems and essays to which he intermittently devoted himself.

Marsden Hartley was born in Lewiston, Maine, on January 4, 1877, and was educated there, and in Cleveland and New York. The Hartley family moved to Ohio in the early 1890s, but Maine and its landscape left an indelible impression upon the young Hartley.

Hartley was typical of many artists of his generation in two respects: first, in his instinctive attraction to the inventions of the European *avant garde*¹; and second, in his willingness to borrow selectively from them, and from the work of his fellow American artists. The inclination toward an eclectic approach was first manifested in his 1908 landscapes which drew heavily upon the stitch-like brushwork of the Swiss post-impressionist, Segantini. The following year, having been introduced to Ryder's work, Hartley's style altered radically and, in place of the Segantini "stitch," his "black landscapes" were marked by a somber darkness reflecting the Ryder influence.

In 1909 Hartley had his first one-man exhibition in New York, at the pioneering Photo-Secession Gallery operated by Alfred Stieglitz. Although the exhibition failed to excite great critical acclaim, it did mark the beginning of the long and fruitful friendship between artist and dealer. Marsden Hartley, like many other American pioneers in the early years of this century, gained the protection and encouragement of Alfred Stieglitz which was instrumental in forwarding the cause of modern art in this country.

At Stieglitz's gallery, Hartley was first introduced to some of the legendary works of the European moderns. He later wrote:

We began to hear names like Matisse, Picasso, Cezanne, Rousseau, and Manolo, this last name never heard before, and still none too well known outside immediate circles, and it was from all this fresh influx that I personally was to receive new ideas and new education. There was life in all these new things, there was excitement, there were healthy revolt, investigation, discovery and an utterly new world opened out of it all.²

The works at the Photo-Secession Gallery increased Hartley's desire to travel in Europe, as many of the Stieglitz group had already done. In 1912, he embarked for Paris and worked there for a year before moving to Germany in 1913, where he became associated with the Blaue Reiter group. During his first European stay Hartley rapidly moved through the influences of fauvism, symbolism, Kandinsky, and German expressionism, before returning to America in 1915.

Back in this country, he proved no less peripatetic and no less susceptible to selected borrowings from other artists. The last half of the decade was taken up with travels and painting in Provincetown, Bermuda, Maine, New Mexico, California, and New York. By 1921 his restless nature redirected him to Europe. Alfred Stieglitz organized a successful auction of 117 of his paintings and drawings, and with the approximately \$5000 in proceeds Hartley financed his return to Europe. Except for brief trips home, he was to remain abroad for the next nine years.

After a short stay in Paris, Hartley resettled in Berlin early in 1922, where he spent the next two years. During this period, he was concerned primarily with still-life compositions. The objects used in the still lifes were frequently repeated and held a special meaning for the artist. His biographer, Elizabeth McCausland, has noted that:

To still-life—perhaps as a finger exercise—he returned again and again. . . . He enjoyed painting these arrangements especially when he might import a touch of nostalgia by including a favorite vase or dish. His domestic treasures were few, for his manner of life—moving from one place to another at short intervals—did not encourage him to establish more than a *pied-a-terre*. Yet he cherished some bits of furniture and of ceramic ware. . . .³

The poverty which limited his possessions also influenced his turn to lithography in 1923. Hartley was familiar with the printmaker's art, having shared a New York studio with the etcher, Ernest Roth, and also having known the prodigious printmakers of the Stieglitz circle, John Marin and Max Weber. But it was not until 1923 that Hartley attempted any prints on his own. In Berlin, he was directed to the medium in part because it was relatively inexpensive.

Considerations other than the strictly economic may also have influenced this novel development in Hartley's work. In this country, the tradition of handcrafted, graphic arts had been disturbed by the development of power press printing and the wide dissemination of photo-mechanical reproductions. Although Europe was not immune to these innovations, technological advances had come slightly later



and had not as greatly affected the older tradition of the skilled handcraftsman. Thus, American artists in Europe were frequently swayed by the printer's argument that all the artist needed to do was to create the design and let the printer finish the task of pulling the prints. It is likely that Hartley's 1923 lithographs, and possibly those of a decade later, were printed by someone other than the artist. McCausland noted that "As late as 1930, he had never packed and crated his paintings despite his chronic need for funds. So probably he did not choose to undergo the manual labor of the lithographer's craft, but rather made drawings which were transferred to the stone and printed by some small tradesperson," whose identity has been lost to us.⁴

Whatever the combination of events that impelled him toward the process, Hartley's initial essays in lithography were of a rather traditional sort. The motifs were the same fruit and floral still-life combinations which appeared in his paintings of that year, and frequently his translations from canvas to lithographic stone were rather direct without consideration for the special properties of the new medium.

Hartley's "cherished ceramic ware" appeared in the prints as well as in the paintings. *Bowl of Fruit* (Cat. #1) is characteristic of most of the 1923 lithographs in its centralized image; Hartley's failure to utilize the full dimensions of the stone seems to indicate a hesitation as he ventured into the new medium.⁵ Similar composition can be found in at least four oil paintings of the period, all utilizing the same white compote; closest in design is his *Still Life* of 1923, now in the



Georges Braque, Still Life, 1921
Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Hudson Walker collection (#20). The print is deftly drawn in tusche with the brush, and unlike the painting, is concerned more with contours than with volumes. Instead of the strongly modelled forms in the painting, the forms in the lithograph are only summarily outlined, with suggestions of highlights brushed onto their surfaces. The black outlines and emphatic contrasts in this print echo the work of Georges Braque from the same period. While in Paris in 1921 and 1922, it is probable that Hartley re-encountered the work of Georges Braque, and several of his 1923 prints and many of his paintings suggest a strong influence from that source.

Several works based upon a fruit basket motif illustrate a subtle shift which occurred in the course of Hartley's first group of prints. *Pears in Basket* (#2) is drawn with the same heavy outlines as noted in the *Bowl of Fruit*. In this it differs from the *Fruit Basket* print (#3) which was drawn with the lithographic crayon and stresses the forms of the fruits far more than the works done in tusche. The later work is a closely-viewed detail of a composition similar to that in a painting of a year earlier, *Fruit Basket* (#22). In focusing on the round forms of the fruits rather than upon the decorative whole of the motif, Hartley moved closer to the concerns found in Cezanne's art and away from the Braque-like works which preceded. The forms are still sketchy and the edges are still heavily drawn, but the tonal gradations afforded by the lithographic crayon enabled him to approximate the Cezannesque modelling which increasingly came to characterize his work.

This shift to a concern for modelling is one indication of an allegiance to Cezanne which became nearly an obsession with Hartley later in the decade. His interest in this approach is seen in the more fully realized *Apples in Basket* (#8), which again repeated a motif found in his oils of the same year. But whereas the painting of *Bowl of Fruit on Table* (#24) shows a continuation of the Braque-inspired style with its emphasis upon outlines and contrasts, the lithograph is more subtle in its gradations of tone and more cohesive as a design. *Apples on Table* (#7) gives perhaps the clearest measure of the new concern in Hartley's art, the print echoing certain of Cezanne's still-life studies. This lithograph could by extension be considered parent to the beautiful pencil and silver-point drawings which Hartley did in 1927. Similarly, his 1923 print of a *Dish of Apples and Pears* (#9) could be seen as the model for a later pastel of the same subject (#23), also very much patterned after Cezanne's example.

Although his interest in Cezanne's art is well known, it is generally discussed in reference to his works from the middle of the decade onward, while Hartley was working in and around his master's home in Aix-en-Provence. The lithographs of 1923 give evidence of an earlier concern for these models, and also show Cezanne's importance for rescuing Hartley from the decorative effects of the School of Paris, which were basically alien to his nature. It was under the severe discipline of working after Cezanne's models that Hartley



Paul Cezanne, *Apples*, 1879-1882
Courtesy, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design

eventually renounced expressionistic painting. In a famous statement of 1928 on "Art and the Personal Life,"⁶ Hartley confessed that:

I have joined, once and for all, the ranks of the intellectual experimentalists. I can hardly bear the sound of the words 'expressionism,' 'emotionalism,' 'personality,' and such, because they imply the wish to express personal life, and I prefer to have no personal life. Personal art is for me a matter of spiritual indelicacy.

Three years later, returned to America, Hartley was working in New England and concerned with the unique qualities of that area's landscape. He wrote his friend, Carl Sprinchorn, that "I am clearing my mind of all art nonsense, trying to accomplish simplicity and purity of vision for Life itself, for that is more important to me than anything else in my life."⁷

In 1931 Hartley was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship which took him from New England to Mexico in the fall of 1932. His Mexican interlude was not a happy one; ill health plagued him, and his paintings were sidetracked in an esoteric, literary and symbolic vein at odds with his basic interests.

Hartley once wrote that "I care more for metals and stones, for ice and cold winds of the north, for gothic rigidity and gothic loftiness—the difference between the south nature and the north nature, I guess."⁸ From his disastrous year in Mexico Hartley returned to Germany to seek solace and new strength in the "ice and cold winds" of the Bavarian Alps. During the autumn and winter of 1933/34 he lived in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and devoted himself to the Alpine landscape which surrounded him.

The works which he produced on this last European visit, which lasted from September through February, were among the best which Hartley ever did. To one of his patrons he wrote that the peaks around Garmisch-Partenkirchen proved to him that he was really "a mountain and snow person."⁹

The mountain motif had been a recurrent theme for Hartley and dominated his life from his earliest recollections of Lewiston. In pursuit of the mountain he travelled from Maine across two continents; while in Bavaria he observed that "my love for mountains never diminishes."¹⁰ Although the attraction to the mountain was constant, his handling of the subject underwent a shift with his return to Germany in 1933. Instead of simply beautiful scenery, the Alpine peaks gave Hartley a new inspiration. Elizabeth McCausland has noted that during this period:

His concepts grew richer and deeper until his image ceased to be a literal scientific transcript of nature and became a powerful visual expression of the meaning of the mountain as it impinged on the artist and through him on his audience. . . . He might have painted the Alpine peak as scenery—he had written on his visit to California in 1919 that there was no landscape there, only scenery—but instead he painted his subject in all its power and glory, the visible sign of an invisible splendor.¹¹

Describing his Bavarian stay to Stieglitz, Hartley called it “the shrine of my delivery.”¹²

The prints and paintings of this German winter do not recall precedents in the same manner as the 1923 prints. Indeed, during his few months in Garmisch-Partenkirchen Hartley seems finally to have found himself and to have laid aside the eclectic baggage he had so long carried.

The rainy and foggy winter gave the artist the chance to work in somber monotonous, an effect which was readily translatable into lithographic terms. In all of his views, the mountains rise in stark, majestic thrusts above the Alpine valleys and villages. In spite of the inclement weather Hartley travelled about the area with his sketch-

*Waxenstein Peaks, from Bavarian Sketchbook, September 1933
Babcock Galleries, New York*



book, making studies for the paintings, pastels, and prints he was to produce.

The first site to attract him was the Waxenstein peaks, which he sketched as early as September 10. In one of his earliest sketchbooks from that period, Hartley devoted considerable attention to studies of this jagged pinnacle of rock and snow. By mid-September the emphatically vertical design of the lithograph (#14) was established, and it was used as well in a pastel from that period (#25). The hard density of the print is dramatically different from the 1923 lithographs, a fact which might be explained by Hartley's earlier practice in the medium. The lithograph was printed later that fall in a substantially larger edition than the still-life prints; the Bavarian lithographs may



25: *The Waxenstein, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, 1933*



27: *Garmisch-Partenkirchen*, ca. 1933

have been in editions as large as 150 impressions, this increase perhaps explained by Hartley's greater fame and saleability at this stage of his life.¹³

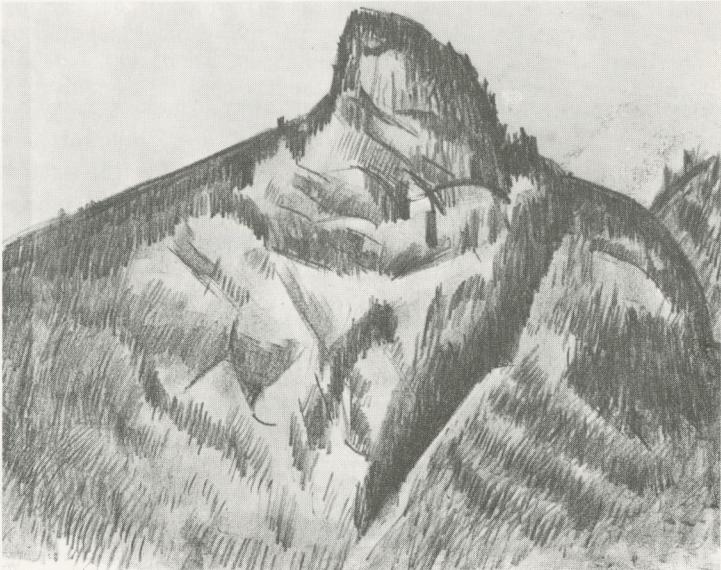
Hartley's next print was based on the jagged *Dreiterspitz* (#15) which he first sketched in early October. Here the great verticality and narrow pyramidal form of the *Waxenstein* is relieved by a horizontal format, but the darkened crags of the highest peak give them a drama and a loftiness no less grand than that of the earlier print. Several oils also resulted from this motif (#27) and they use the same format as the print. Hartley's greater familiarity and ease with the oil pigment gives the paintings a sense of glacial flow and cascade lacking in the lithographs. Yet despite the difference in media, the effect of monumentality is shared by these works and all the Bavarian views.

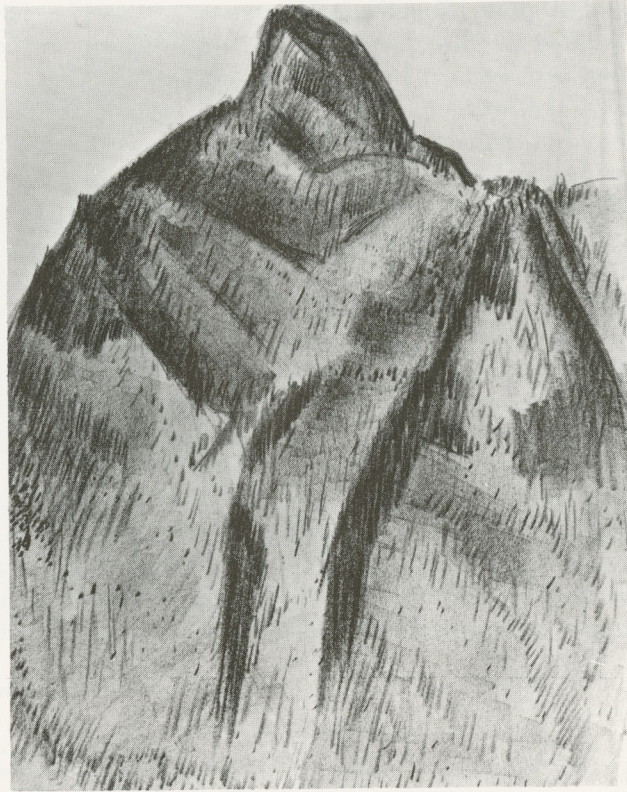
Dreiterspitz, printed in the winter months of 1933-34, was followed by *Alpspitz* (#16). The drawings based on this mountain (#29-31) show a struggle between the verticality of the first print and the horizontal format of the *Dreiterspitz*. Apparently the crowding of the motif necessitated by the vertical format displeased Hartley, for the expansive horizontal view was chosen for the print. Alternating diagonals indicate both a spatial recession and a vertical rise toward the central *Alpspitz* peak.

Hartley's last print, *Kopelberg-Oberammergau* (#17), like *Alpspitz*, was printed in 1934; and like its predecessor, the preparatory drawings used both vertical and horizontal formats (#32-33). In this case, however, the artist opted for the more dramatic vertical. The central pyramid of the mountain rises over and dwarfs the foreground buildings, a device Hartley also used in a painting of *Waxenstein Peaks* (#26) and which dated back to some of his earliest Maine mountains, such as the *Deserted Farm* of 1909. The drawing in this last print is considerably lighter than in the earlier works, and the effect is less harsh and foreboding.

The Bavarian prints which Hartley finished in 1934 were his last essays in lithography. Later in his life he did several drawings of New York City scenes, intending them to be used for additional prints, but they were never transferred to the lithographic stone. Although the production of prints is small in relation to the entire body of work, they display early indications of directions which the artist was later to pursue in his paintings and drawings. The prints deserve more study than the outright dismissal they are generally given, when they receive mention at all. Elizabeth McCausland, for instance, simply commented that the lithographs were "drawn with

32: *The Mountain*, ca. 1934





31: *The Mountain*, ca. 1934

aesthetic irresponsibility” and that they “lack sensitiveness and flair.”¹⁴

In February, 1934, Hartley left Germany for the last time and returned to America. He settled first in Bangor, Maine, where he continued his landscape painting with a new seriousness and a new interest in his surroundings. For the rest of his life Maine was to be his home, and the great series of paintings which resulted are the basis for his present fame. Yet the final German winter had paved the way for his return home, and the explorations of the Bavarian mountains were the basis for his transcendent series of paintings based on Mt. Katahdin.

After many years of wandering, Hartley’s return to Maine evoked a new creative power from within him. In one of his greatest poems, Hartley described his repatriation:

Return of the Native

Rock, juniper, and wind,
and a seagull sitting still—
all these of one mind.
He who finds will
to come home
will surely find old faith
made new again,
and lavish welcome.

Old things breaketh
new, when heart and soul
lose no whit of old refrain;
it is a smiling festival
when rock, juniper, and wind
are of one mind;
a seagull signs the bond—
makes what was broken, whole.

In the catalogue for his 1937 exhibition at Stieglitz's new gallery, *An American Place*, Hartley explored further the sensations which were aroused in him by his return and by his new "wholeness." In an often-quoted passage he wrote:

The quality of nativeness is coloured by heritage, birth, and environment, and is therefore for this reason that I wish to declare myself the painter from Maine.

We are subjects of our nativeness, and are at all times happily subject to it, only the mollusk, the chameleon, or the sponge being able to affect dissolution in this aspect. . . .

And so I say to my native continent of Maine, be patient and forgiving, I will soon put my cheek to your cheek expecting the welcome of the prodigal, and be glad of it, listening all the while to the slow, rich, solemn music of the Androscoggin, as it flows along.¹⁵

In the end Hartley's life came full circle. With his rededication to his native Maine, he fulfilled Paul Rosenfeld's prophecy of years earlier:

It was down east that he was born and grew and lived a great many of his years. . . . And when he has to make his peace with life, it is to this soil, so it would appear, that he must return. Here are his own people, the ones he must accept and understand and cherish. For among them only can he get the freedom of his own soul.¹⁶

CHARLES C. ELDREDGE, *Director*
Museum of Art, University of Kansas

CATALOGUE

In all cases, measurements are given in inches with height preceding width. All lithographs are transfer lithographs, and the sizes given are the maximum dimensions of the image; where the size of the sheet is known, it is included in parentheses. The lithographs of still-life compositions were printed in editions of 25, with the exception of #4, *Grapes*; the size of the *Grapes* edition is unknown, although it is likely that it, too, was no more than 25. The later prints based on mountain views were issued in larger editions, possibly as large as 150 impressions. All the lithographs were published in one state only.

LITHOGRAPHS



1. *Bowl of Fruit*, 1923
12 3/8 x 12 1/4 (17 5/8 x 15 1/2)
The Art Institute of Chicago, The Albert H. Wolf Fund.



2. *Pears in Basket*, 1923

13 3/8 x 17 7/16 (18 x 23 7/8)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nebenzahl,
1966.



3. *Fruit Basket*, 1923

13 $\frac{11}{16}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ (15 $\frac{7}{16}$ x 15 $\frac{1}{32}$)

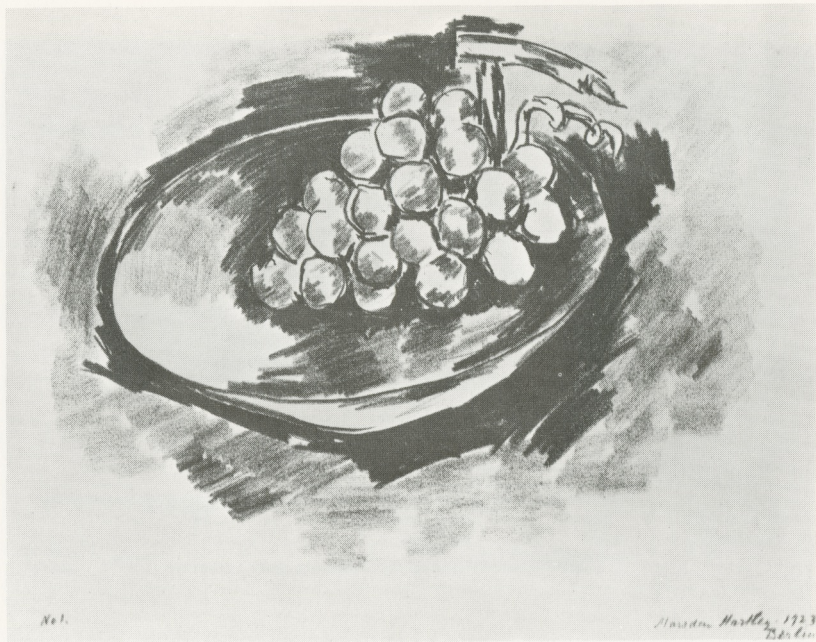
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nebenzahl,
1966.



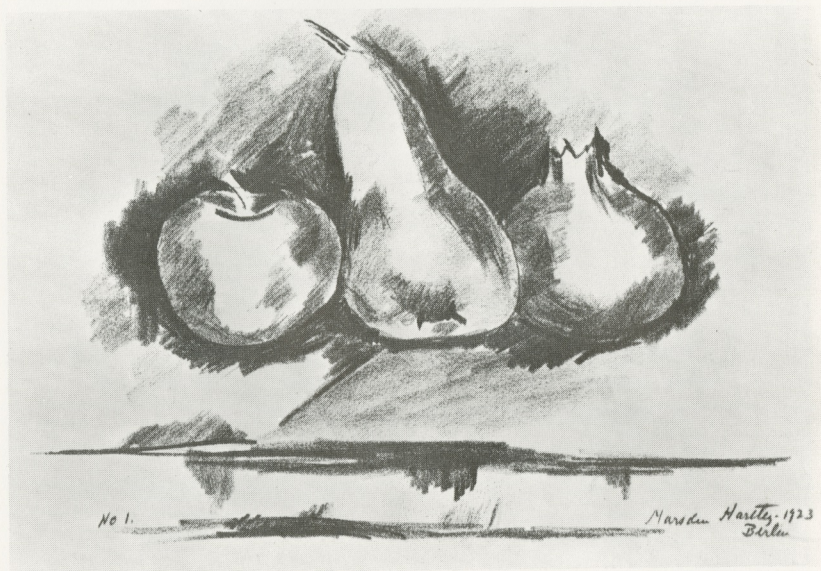
4. *Grapes*, 1923

9 5/8 x 12 1/4 (13 7/16 x 15 3/8)

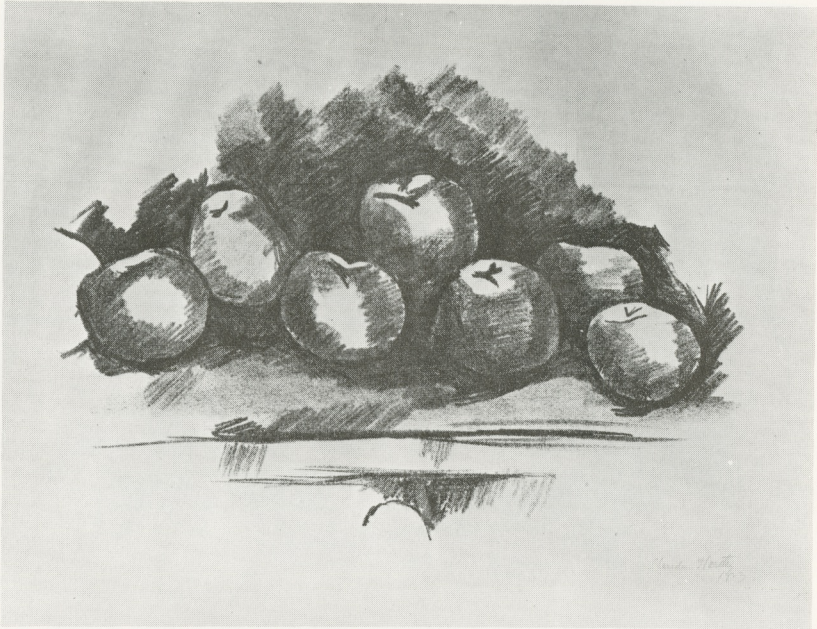
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.



5. *Grapes in Bowl*, 1923
12 x 16 (18 x 22 1/2)
Babcock Galleries, New York.



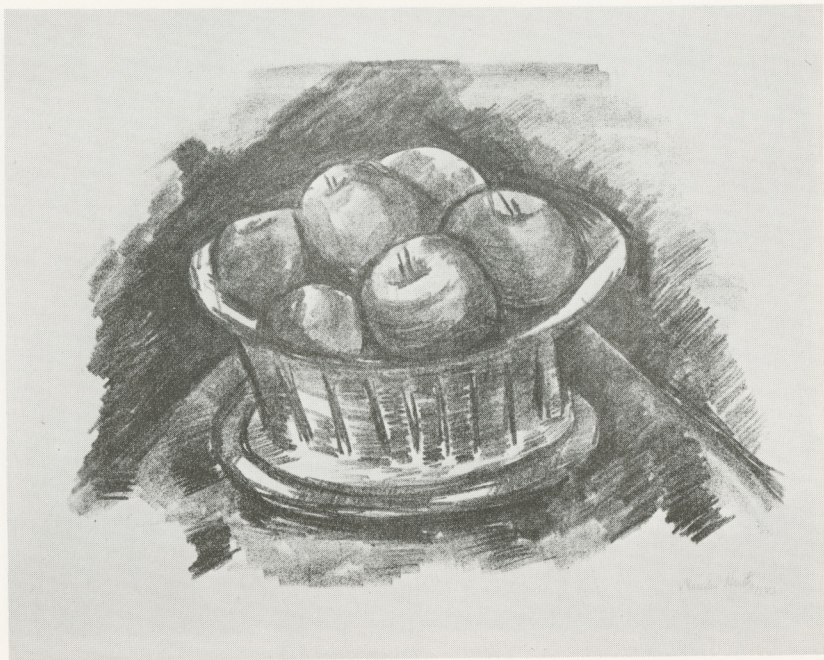
6. *Pomegranate, Pear and Apple*, 1923
10 x 14 1/2 (11 3/4 x 18)
Babcock Galleries, New York.



7. *Apples on Table*, 1923

12 1/4 x 18 (19 3/4 x 25 5/16)

The University of Kansas Museum of Art.



8. *Apples in Basket*, 1923

13 3/8 x 18 3/8 (19 7/8 x 25 1/2)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nebenzahl,
1966.



9. *Dish of Apples and Pears*, 1923

12 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ (15 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 21 $\frac{3}{4}$)

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Cornelius
N. Bliss.



10. *Flowers in Goblet #1*, 1923
18 x 10 1/4 (25 3/4 x 19 3/4)
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nebenzahl,
1966.



11. *Flowers in Goblet #2*, 1923

17 5/8 x 10 9/16 (26 5/8 x 19 3/4)

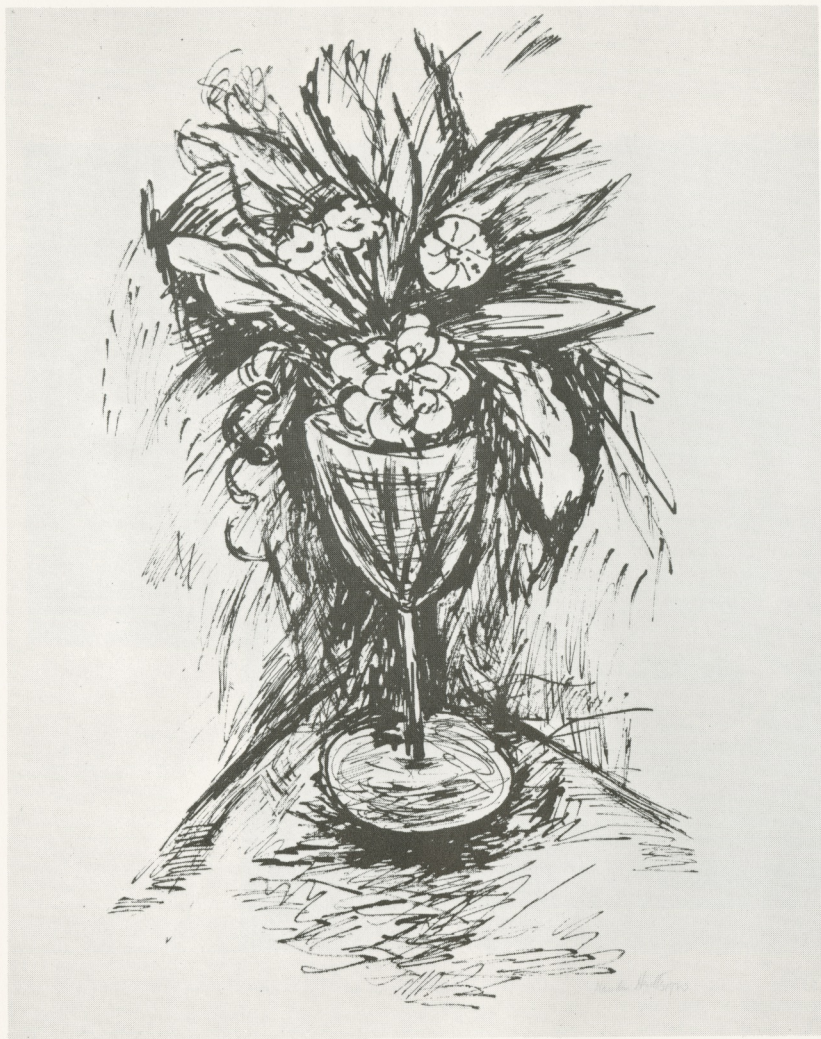
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nebenzahl,
1966.



12. *Flowers in Goblet #3*, 1923

16 3/8 x 10 1/2 (25 3/4 x 19 3/4)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nebenzahl,
1966.



13. *Flowers in Goblet #4*, 1923

12 1/2 x 13 1/4 (25 5/8 x 19 1/2)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nebenzahl,
1966.



14. *Waxenstein*, 1933

12 5/8 x 10 1/4 (15 7/8 x 11 3/8)

The Art Museum, Princeton University.



15. *Dreitorspitz*, 1933-34

12 1/4 x 15 7/8 (16 x 23 3/4)

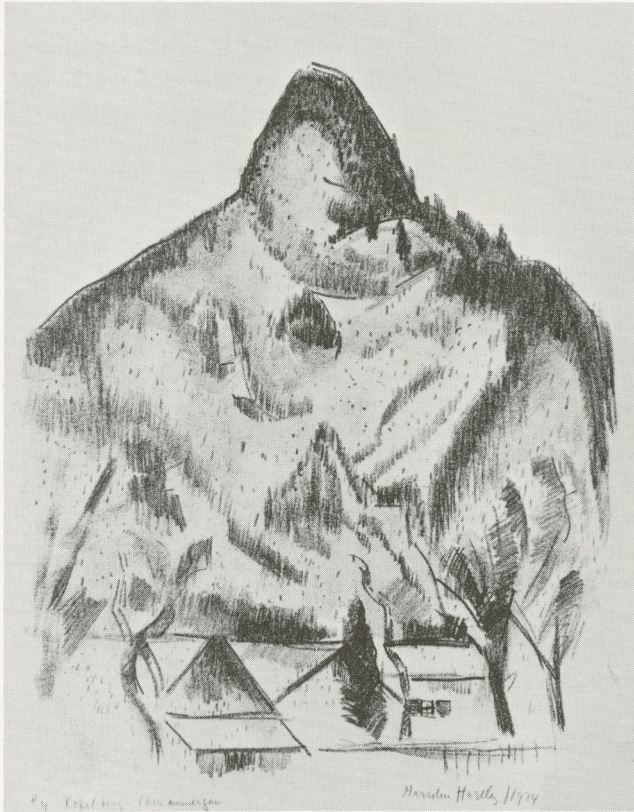
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.



16. *Alspitz*, 1934

11 1/2 x 15 1/2

Oklahoma Art Center Permanent Collection: "Monuments of American Graphic Art," collection of Winston and Ada Eason.



17. *Kopelberg-Oberammergau*, 1934
15 1/2 x 12 1/2 (22 3/4 x 15 3/4)
University of Maine, Orono.

RELATED WORKS

18. *Still Life with Grapes*
Oil on canvas, 23 1/4 x 43
The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio, Gift of Ferdinand Howald.
19. *Pears in White Compote*, 1923
Oil on canvas, 21 1/4 x 25 1/2
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.
20. *Still Life*, 1923
Oil on canvas, 20 x 24
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.
21. *Still Life #14*, 1924
Oil on canvas, 22 x 28
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.
22. *Fruit in Basket*, 1922
Oil on canvas, 22 x 36 1/2
Lehigh University, Anna E. Wilson Collection.
23. *Still Life*
Pastel on paper, 15 1/4 x 19 1/4
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Edward Ogden
24. *Bowl of Fruit on Table*, ca. 1922
Oil on canvas, 23 1/2 x 23 1/2
Babcock Galleries, New York.
25. *The Waxenstein, Garmisch-Partenkirchen*, 1933
Pastel on gray paper, 20 1/8 x 15 11/16
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.

26. *Waxenstein Peaks*, 1933-34
Oil on board, 29 1/4 x 18 1/8
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Lynes.
27. *Garmisch-Partenkirchen*, ca. 1933 (Dreiterspitz)
Oil on canvas, 20 x 29
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. George C. Kennedy.
28. *Alpspitz-Mittenwald Road*, 1933
Oil on canvas, 17 1/2 x 29 1/2
The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, The Preston Morton Collection.
29. *Garmisch-Partenkirchen*, 1933 (Alpspitz)
Lithographic crayon on tracing paper, 13 3/16 x 9 15/16
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.
30. *Mountain* (Alpspitz)
Charcoal on paper, 12 1/2 x 15 5/8
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia.
31. *Alpine Motive VI*, 1933 (Alpspitz)
Sepia ink on paper, 5 3/16 x 7 3/4
On extended loan from Ione and Hudson D. Walker to the University Gallery, University of Minnesota.
32. *The Mountain*, ca. 1934 (Kopelberg-Oberammergau)
Pencil on paper
Collection of Mrs. Frances K. Malek.
33. *The Mountain*, ca. 1934 (Kopelberg-Oberammergau)
Pencil on paper
Collection of Mrs. Frances K. Malek.
34. ALFRED STIEGLITZ
Portrait of Marsden Hartley, 1913
Photograph
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William van Keppel.