

# Free report on anna hills the spell of the sea

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## **Anna Hills (1882-1930) The Spell of the Sea Oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in. The Irvine Museum**

Abstract:

The Irvine Museum of Modern Art is a haven of excellent works with several hues and shades. The museum regularly organizes exhibitions by several artists and among these one may include the works of Franz A Bischoff, George bandriff, Alson S Clark, Frank Cuprien and Paul de Longpre'.

The museum was founded by Joan Irvine Smith, Athale Richardson Irvine Clark and James Irvine Swinden opening its doors on the 5th of January 1993. From the opening, the museum has worked tirelessly and intensely to promote art hailing from Californian artists particularly from the Impressionist period (1890-1930). The museum has also organized no less than sixty five exhibitions dealing with various themes such as ' Masters of Light', California Impressionists, The Art and Life of William Wendt and several others.

I decided to choose a work from the current ongoing exhibition called ' The Spell of the Sea' by Anna Hills' which beautifully portrays the power of the sea in an infinite and largely beautiful context.

### **Artistic media: The artistic medium is an oil painting which describes the sea in a very vivid and powerful way**

The work was created in the 1920's with physical dimensions of 30 by 40 inches

Ownership of the artwork: The Irvine Museum

How did you discover this museum? I found it by searching in the internet about the museums in

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Orange County, California.

Anna Hills received her training at the Art institute of Chicago as well as the Cooper Union Art School in New York. She taught at public schools and then travelled to Paris where she managed to continue her education at the Academie Julien in Paris after which she spent four years travelling around Europe. She returned to the United States in 1932 where she moved to Laguna Beach in California and settled there. She founded the Laguna Beach Art Association for a number of years having also served as President of the association. She was instrumental in raising funds to establish the Irvine Museum through her tireless hard work. Hills was very respected as a teacher and she also promoted the visual arts through several lectures as well as the organization of exhibitions which were shared around Orange County schools. Her works were usually observed as lacking the use of strong colours but this style changed when she arrived at Laguna Beach as the palette she used brightened up considerably. She painted both in oils and watercolours.

## **Description of painting**

The painting is full of original touches which demonstrate the originality of the artist's brushwork. The trees are particularly effective in the sense that they create a sense of haunting beauty with the drooping characteristics and the colourings of the leaves. The vast expanse of the sea is contrasted with the smaller space given to the shore.

Hills work is a typically romantic work with a vast canvas featuring a lonely expanse of the sea. The rocks are also very vivid in their characteristically wild depictions. It depicts the voyage of man from childhood to adulthood in

a rather powerful way especially with the bold strokes of the sea. An instructive comparison is with Rosa Bonheur's 'The Plowing of the Camelia's' is quite different in the sense that it portrays a farmer guiding his beasts of burden through heavily ploughed soil. However there is a solitary figure also in the painting which indicates that the person is going through a sort of catharsis in work.

When one compares the brushwork in Cole's work, it seems that there is an element of rage and anger in the elements which is rather powerful and striking on all counts. The romantic element does seem to be present in both works although there is an earthly sense of realism in Bonheur's painting as opposed to the almost mythological fantasy in Cole's. 'The Voyage of Manhood' is also rather striking in the sense that the figure of the man is almost tiny when compared with the vast cavern around him which seems to portray the universe as man travails through the stages of life.

Bonheur's brushwork is also characteristically significant in that she manages to portray that sense of earthliness which is missing from Cole's work which is quite on the mythological side (Sayre 2006). Both works are different yet they are also strikingly similar in certain aspects.

## **Artistic Movement**

The artistic movement in this painting is very similar to Impressionism although it is slightly late in the day for that. The brushwork of Hills creates a sense of the French Impressionists such as Renoir and even in some parts Matisse, especially in the expanse of the trees and the sea. The painting creates a heady sense of romanticism although the way the trees are leaning also indicates a beauty which is quite far from the directness of

impressionism. Still that is probably the artistic movement which is closest to the artist's desires.

What is your INTERPRETATION of the artwork? What is its meaning? How have other critics INTERPRETED this artist? Sources for interpretive criticism by others may include books about the artist, scholarly journals, newspaper, and magazine articles.

The painting seems to embody loneliness and an innermost look at oneself especially with regards to the sea. Trees are lonely and drooping and it is almost as if the artist is looking at her own doom as she goes down to the shore to go into the sea forever. It is indeed a powerfully haunting painting demonstrating several aspects of life which has vanished accordingly into the vast expanse of the blue ocean. Commonality. What does the work of art have in common with the other works of art that it is displayed with at the museum? Is there a common subject matter, artistic movement, or artist? The work of Anna Hills shows a lot of similarities with other artists such as Frank Myers and Paul Grimm which describe similar situations in art. The bold and at times light brushwork are strikingly similar in several cases and demonstrate that the artists are thinking along the same lines. However a typical example of great beauty would be the painting depicting the Lewis and Clark expedition, which most certainly shows the incredible prowess that these two artists had. The almost pastel like qualities of the painting shows an intrinsic understanding of the conditions in question which were undoubtedly mysterious and full of fantasy. The way cowboy life is portrayed is also very much romanticised and demonstrates that this style of living was

not only crucially important for the new settler in the West but also had its own trials and tribulations in this respect.

**What is your EVALUATIVE assessment of this work of art? Provide some justification for your response.**

The work by Anna Hill is very striking and can be considered as a very fine painting depicting the sea in all its vast expanse and power but at the same time also showing a certain calmness and serenity. The way the trees are placed also has something to do with the shelter being provided by the shoreline similar to works by Toulouse Lautrec and Renoir. How have other critics EVALUATED the merits of this artist? Sources for evaluative criticism by others may include books about the artist, scholarly journals, newspaper, and magazine articles.

Jean Stern in her seminal book, ' Master of Light' focuses exclusively on Hills as a plein-art painter of some repute citing her innovative brushstrokes.

Westphal also gives prominence to Hills in her appraisal of plein art painters whilst Trenton is also very positive about Hills. Describe the work in terms of the elements of visual arts that were covered in class during week one.

The work is a classic example of visual arts in the sense that it is a still life painting using expressionism and romanticism accordingly. It is a beautiful snapshot of the trees and the sea which recreates great beauty accordingly.

**Works Cited:**

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