A painting of a winter landscape. In the foreground, a large, textured tree trunk stands on the left. The ground is covered in snow, with some patches of ice or water. In the background, a dense forest of bare trees is visible. A large, bright, yellow sun or moon is positioned in the sky, casting a warm, golden light over the scene. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet.

Art for All

The Swedish Experience
in Mid-America

Art for All

The Swedish Experience in Mid-America

by Cori Sherman North,
Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery Curator

with an essay contributed by Donald Myers,
Director of the Hillstrom Museum of Art at
Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota,

and introduction and acknowledgements by
Ron Michael, Sandzén Gallery Director



August 25 through October 20, 2019



2021: Dates to be Determined



Hillstrom Museum of Art

2021/22: Dates to be Determined

Introduction and Acknowledgements

The inclination for the Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery to develop an ambitious, though certainly not comprehensive, exhibition of early Swedish-American artwork has been brewing since the Gallery's inception in 1957. Jonas Olof Grafström was one of the true pioneers in this field and his history helped spark the idea for this show. Additionally, there have been many instances of these artists making their way into exhibitions here, but none as far-reaching as *Art for All*. Our namesake, Birger Sandzén, had ties to nearly all of the painters, printmakers, and sculptors represented, showing his amazing ability to network. Therefore, it's fitting that we finally tackle this incredible association of artists and their work, which was so important in building an appreciation for art in the United States.

As is always the case in such endeavors, there are many people to thank for making this exhibition possible. Foremost acknowledgement goes to Sandzén Gallery curator, Cori Sherman North. She developed the vision for the exhibition, greased the wheels to get everything going, and is overseeing all of the elements through to completion. Her attention to accuracy and detail will make it shine. Director Don Myers at the Hillstrom Museum of Art at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, collaborated with Cori to include important artists not available in our collection. We are very thankful for his help and look forward to the Hillstrom Museum showing *Art for All* in 2021. It will also travel to Chicago's Swedish American Museum, and we

appreciate Director Karin Abercrombie's assistance to make it happen.

Conservation of several paintings from the Sandzén Gallery's permanent collection was made possible by a generous grant from the **Swedish Council of America**, a national non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Swedish heritage. They also provided support for the printing of this catalogue. We are deeply grateful to them and hope the organization's members will be proud of the exhibition.

We are also grateful to those who loaned works from their collections to help add depth. Bill and Carol Gusenius, the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art at the University of Oklahoma, the McPherson Museum, the Reverend Richard and Janet Monson, Dallas and Evelyn Nelson, and John and Margaret Presley were gracious in allowing us to use works they own. Additional thanks to Fran Cochran and her family for donating several works to the Sandzén Gallery's permanent collection prior to this exhibition.

Finally, abiding and sincere accolades must be directed to all the Swedish artists that immigrated to this country with the idea of bringing beauty and vitality to their new home. We applaud and celebrate their efforts and achievements.

- Ron Michael, Director of the
Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery



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Swedish Art at the Hillstrom Museum of Art

The Hillstrom Museum of Art at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota, is delighted to collaborate with the Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery to present *Art for All: The Swedish Experience in Mid-America*. The Swedish roots of Gustavus Adolphus College remain crucial to its identity, which can be recognized in the importance of the college's annual Nobel Conference, the only lecture program in the United States given the official authorization of the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, and in the appearance of Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia on campus as part of the celebration

of the sesquicentennial of Gustavus in 2012. Their visit included a tour of the Hillstrom Museum of Art exhibition *150 Years of Swedish Art*, which featured around 50 paintings from between 1862 and 2012, lent by Stockholm's Nationalmuseum and Moderna Museet.

The Hillstrom Museum of Art's namesake, Richard L. Hillstrom, was keenly interested in his own Swedish heritage. He graduated from Gustavus in 1938, and after finishing seminary in Rock Island, Illinois, in 1942, soon had his first parish, in Gary, Indiana. At

that point, despite having had no particular inculcation in art either from his family life growing up in rural Dassel, Minnesota, or from Gustavus, which at the time offered no art classes, Hillstrom began collecting art.

Works by Swedish American artists were, in fact, Hillstrom's first acquisitions. He had a minister friend whose father-in-law collected art by Swedish American artists, including Charles Hallberg (1855–1940), who was born in Göteborg, Sweden, and eventually settled in Chicago, where he made his artistic career. The first painting Hillstrom bought, in 1943, was a seascape by Hallberg; he later donated it to the American Swedish Institute in Minneapolis, some years before the founding of the Hillstrom Museum of Art in 2000. The museum since then has been able to acquire, using funds donated by Dawn and Edward Michael, primarily Swedish American works. Hallberg's *Morning on the Open Sea*, on view in this exhibit, along with several others were acquired through the Michaels' generosity.

Through Hallberg's widow, Amanda, Hillstrom first became familiar with the work of Birger Sandzén (1871–1954), who had been a friend of Hallberg. The two artists had a practice of exchanging paintings to sell for each other, and Hillstrom bought three of Sandzén's works from Amanda Hallberg. He donated all three of these to the museum, along with a number of prints by Sandzén. Another Sandzén painting he acquired at this time was given to the Minneapolis Institute of Art, which featured his collection in the 1993 exhibition *American Masters: Selections from the Richard Lewis Hillstrom Collection*.

Sanzén had a special relationship with Gustavus Adolphus College; the artist came to campus at least twice. His first time at Gustavus was in 1901, when he came to visit his friend Karl A. Kilander, a professor of Swedish and Christianity. Sandzén discussed this trip in letters to his brother back in Sweden (now in the Göteborg Landsarchiv), telling how he had been offered a teaching position at Gustavus—one that he apparently nearly decided to accept. Sandzén returned to the campus in 1941, when he was invited by a former pupil of his at Bethany College, Lorena

Daeschner Hall (1911–1995), who helped form the Art Department at Gustavus and taught there from 1938 to 1946. During this visit, Sandzén presented a formal lecture and had an exhibit of his works, resulting in a number of his works being purchased by citizens of Saint Peter (some later donated to the museum), and also two paintings acquired from the artist by the college. One of these was purchased by a group of 100 students as a gift for the college's planned new library building. Sandzén noted in a letter of the time that he considered that painting, *Mountain Stream, Eldora, Colorado*, to be one of his best interpretations of the heart of the Rocky Mountains.



Birger Sandzén, circa 1920, Sandzén Archives, BSMG

Sanzén is the Swedish American artist represented with the largest number of individual works in the Hillstrom Museum of Art. Hillstrom eventually expanded his collecting emphasis and began acquiring works by prominent American artists regardless of their ethnicity. He became particularly interested in the Ashcan School, and made it a goal to acquire a work by each of "The Eight," those realist artists surrounding the famed painter and teacher Robert Henri (1865–1920). Typically Hillstrom acquired a single example of an artist's work, but in addition to Sandzén there were other Swedish Americans represented multiple times in his collection. These include B.J.O. Nordfeldt (1878–1955), who is

represented in *Art for All* by several works, including four from the Hillstrom Museum of Art, two of them works Hillstrom had acquired and one that was donated to Gustavus by Nordfeldt's widow, Emily Abbott Nordfeldt—whom the artist had met during one of his two periods living and working in Minnesota.

Leon Lundmark (1875–1942) is another painter represented multiple times in Hillstrom's collection. Lundmark was born in Mörland, in Kalmar County, Sweden, and was the illegitimate son of the Swedish countess Hanna von Til. He left Sweden in 1906 and settled for a time in Chicago, where he exhibited and served as director of the Scandinavian-American Art Association. Lundmark eventually moved to Altadena, California, and was particularly known for his maritime scenes, featuring his native Sweden, Lakes Michigan and Superior, and on both the East and West Coasts of the United States. One of the smallest paintings in



Beginning of a New Day by Leon Lundmark (1875-1942), circa 1930, oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in., Gift of Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom in memory of Bernard J. Johnson

Art for All is Lundmark's *Lighthouse, Cape Elizabeth, Maine*, which Hillstrom bought in 1943 from Chicago art dealer J.W. Young. Young helped Lundmark's career by selling his works and by publishing a book in 1924 titled *The Rise of Lundmark, Marine Painter*. One of the larger works in this exhibit is Lundmark's monumental seascape *Beginning of a New Day*, which Hillstrom gave to Gustavus a year prior to the opening of the Hillstrom Museum of Art.

Famed artist **John Fabian Carlson** (1875–1947) is represented in Hillstrom's collection and in this exhibition by his evocative and beautiful landscape *Thawing Snow*. Carlson was highly influential through his nationally acclaimed John F. Carlson School of Landscape Painting, which he founded in 1923 in the artist colony of Woodstock, New York, and which operated until 1938. He was born in Kolsebro, Sweden, and came to the United States while a teen, studying at the Art Students League in New York and eventually becoming involved in that school's administration and teaching, including assisting in, and soon directing, its summer program in Woodstock, starting in 1909. He spent many years in the Woodstock area, which may well be the locale depicted in *Thawing Snow*.



John F. Carlson, 1922

One of Carlson's students and fellow Woodstock art colonists was **Henry Mattson** (1887–1971), represented in *Art for All* by his modernist painting *Inlet*, which Hillstrom purchased from New York's prominent Rehn Gallery. Mattson

was born in Gothenberg and came to the United States in 1905, settling in Worcester, Massachusetts, where his brother lived and where he took night classes at the Worcester Museum School. He returned to Sweden in 1913 with the plan to enroll in the Valand School of Art but was rejected because the instructor thought he could not draw. Mattson returned to the United States and, after a short period in Chicago, moved to Woodstock. His work, which is much more expressionistic than the generally impressionistic approach of his teacher, Carlson has been labeled mystic and romantic. Mattson would begin painting without a definite plan or subject and would blend colors on his canvas until forms would emerge almost unconsciously. The sea was a frequent subject of his, and his intent was not to capture any particular aspect or location but to convey a sense of its power. His subject matter, as well as the blues, grays, and greens of his typical palette, were cited by critics as influence from his Scandinavian background.

Carl Sprinchorn (1887–1971) is represented by two works in this exhibition, one an oil painting, *Purple Mountains*, donated by Hillstrom to the Hillstrom Museum of Art, and the other a watercolor, *Beach Scene*, acquired with funds from Dawn and Edward Michael earmarked for acquisitions of Swedish American work. Sprinchorn was born in Broby, Skåne, and came to the United States specifically to study art, having heard of Henri, the Ashcan School, and The Eight. He enrolled in the New York School of Art, where Henri taught, and followed the older artist when he left to form his own Henri School of Art, for which Sprinchorn became the manager. Sprinchorn's abstract and modernist approach is seen in his *Purple Mountains*, which depicts a remote part of the "North Woods" of Maine, where the artist worked for many years. Sprinchorn was a close friend of famed American modernist Marsden Hartley (1877–1943), who, like him, was gay. Hartley came to Maine in 1939 and relied on Sprinchorn's guidance to become familiar with the state that also became an important subject in his own art. Connections between different artists, such as friendships or student/teacher relationships, often influenced Hillstrom in his selection of artworks to acquire and he at one time owned a

work by Hartley, which he donated to the Minneapolis Institute of Art prior to the opening of the Hillstrom Museum of Art.



Purple Mountains by Carl Sprinchorn (1887-1971), circa 1946, oil on canvas mounted on aluminum panel, 16 x 28 ¼ in., Gift of Gift of Reverend Richard Hillstrom

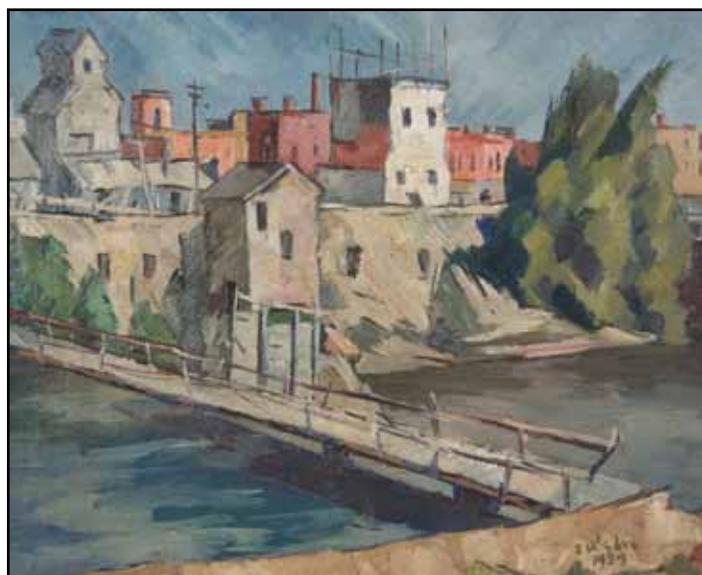
Two artists closely associated with Hillstrom's home state of Minnesota are **Dewey Albinson** (1898–1971) and **Elof Wedin** (1901–1983). Albinson was born in Minnesota just a short time after his parents came from Sweden. He studied at the Minneapolis School of Art (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, MCAD) from 1915 to 1919, then spent time in the early 1920s at New York's Art Students League as well as a period soon afterward studying art in Paris. He returned to Minnesota and served as the director of the Saint Paul School of Art and later was involved in the Depression-era Works Progress Administration, serving as the head of its regional educational division. Albinson is represented in *Art for All* by several landscapes, the genre for which he was particularly known. These include a 1938 oil painting titled *May Snow*, painted during an extended time in Quebec, donated to the Hillstrom Museum of Art in Hillstrom's honor by Colles and Dr. John Larkin, renowned collectors of American art. Also by Albinson in this exhibit is a Cubist-influenced 1935 image from the mining town of Norway, Michigan, titled *Hell Town (Gray Day)*, and a Regionalist-influenced landscape titled *Hillside Farm* from around 1930. The last of these is inscribed by Albinson "To Friend Wedin." Wedin in turn gave it to Hillstrom, who was also a friend of his.

Elof Wedin was born in Härmösand, in east-central Sweden, and came to the United States at age 19. He settled in Minneapolis and studied at the Minneapolis School of Art (now MCAD) in the early 1920s. He also studied briefly at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He was for a time heralded as a blue collar worker who was an artist by night: the artist made his living as a pipefitter and painted evenings and weekends his whole career. Wedin had two solo exhibitions in New York in the 1930s and was involved in New Deal federal art projects in the Midwest. Hillstrom acquired many works by Wedin over the years of their friendship and supported the

artist's career significantly. All four of Wedin's works in *Art for All* were purchased by Hillstrom directly from the artist. They show the range of Wedin's stylistic explorations. *Factory Town*, from 1939, is visually akin to the works of the great French post-Impressionist Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), an influence on Wedin throughout his career. *Boy in Blue Overalls* reflects a period when Wedin was particularly interested in the work of Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920) and has the same attenuated imagery found in that artist's portraits. The later *Portrait of Lois* shows Wedin working in a highly abstracted mode, while *Etude* is a completely abstracted study. Hillstrom, whose pastoral career mainly consisted of serving as chaplain at the Bethesda Lutheran Medical Center in Saint Paul, ran a gallery at the hospital, where he showed the works of many Minnesota artists; here, in 1979, he mounted a 50-year retrospective of Wedin's career, and he eulogized his friend after Wedin's death from many years of exposure to asbestos through his work as a pipefitter.

Hillstrom died in December 2014 at age 99. He was the source of not only the hundreds of artworks donated to the Hillstrom Museum of Art but also monetary donations that formed an endowment that supports the museum's programming and acquisitions. Hillstrom, who once met Sandzén in his role not as an artist but as the leader of the beloved annual Lindsborg, Kansas, festival performing George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*, no doubt would have been very pleased at the opportunity for the museum to partner with the Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery in creating this fine exhibition.

- Donald Myers, Director of the Hillstrom Museum of Art



Factory Town by Elof Wedin (1901-1983), 1939, oil on canvas, 36 ¾ x 31 in., Gift of Reverend Richard Hillstrom

Art for All

The roots of a flourishing, early twentieth-century democratic arts culture in the American Midwest are found in 1880s Sweden. In 1881 a young, radical Anders Zorn (1860-1920) broke with the elite Royal Academy of Fine Arts [*Kungliga Akademien för de fria konsterna*] in Stockholm over issues of artistic freedom, the monopoly on the art market, and a curriculum that had changed very little from the 17th century, setting the stage for a democratic movement now known as Swedish National Romanticism. A group of disgruntled Swedes established a defacto artists' colony at Grèz-sur-Loing just outside Paris, absorbing new modernisms of impressionism and independence from state dictates, trends that declared art to be about the here-and-now of ordinary people's lives lived rather than propagating out-dated and irrelevant values. Swedish artists including Zorn, Richard Bergh (1858-1919), Per Hasselberg (1850-1894), Carl Larsson (1853-1919), and Bruno Liljefors (1860-1939) were among those who banded together in 1885 and resolved to go back to Sweden and change everything. In their minds an authentic Swedish art would reflect its own time, interpret nature and the land, and be independent of artificial conventions while keeping Swedish folk traditions alive.

Swedish National Romanticism

In 1885, 84 Swedish artists of various ages, social standing, and gender signed a letter to the Royal Academy demanding the school teach modern art styles and establish a standing committee to provide a forum for change and reorganization of policy and curriculum. The Academy administration was unmoved by the proposals and simply referred the artists to its patron, King Oscar II. Undaunted, 18 artists organized the first non-Academy-sanctioned exhibition of art in Sweden, *From the Banks of the Seine* [*Från Seinens Strand*], which opened in Stockholm on April 1st, 1886. A decisive resolution came in August of that same year when an Artists League [*Konstnärsförbundet*] was founded without governmental support. An exhibition was then mounted in October--*The Opponents* [*Opponenterna*]-which displayed more than 150 works by 50 artists. Vindication came swiftly as Stockholm's Nationalmuseum purchased several works from the

show for its permanent collection. Teaching the next generation of artists was brought about by Zorn, Bergh, and Hasselberg in the 1890s, each instructing students in free studio sessions--sans course fees or admission requirements, and encouraging independent study quite apart from a Royal Academy training.



Självporträtt [Self-portrait] by Anders Zorn, 1911, etching, 6 ¼ x 4 ¾ in., Greenough Collection: Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

The story of the spread of democratic ideals through a flourishing of arts and culture in America's central prairie lands is traced from these young radicals who turned their backs on 'The Establishment.' In trying to create a national school of art, they had a unity of purpose if not style, and soon found themselves working for broad social reform with the also-new Social Democratic Party for rights to exercise individual artistic freedoms.¹ Several young artists who studied with the League painters and sculptors absorbed the democratic philosophies of "art for all," and later immigrated to America to forge new career paths: including Birger Sandzén,

Carl (Gustafsson) Lotave (1872-1924), Arvid Nyholm (1866-1927), and Bessie Helström (1874-1966). Other immigrant artists such as Olof Grafström (1855-1933), Charles Hallberg (1855-1940), Oscar Jacobson (1882-1966), B.J.O. Nordfeldt (1878-1955), and Elof Wedin (1901-1983) arrived from a variety of Swedish provinces to settle in the Midwest and participate in the founding of exhibition annuals and establish art collections in public schools and libraries in their new communities of Lindsborg, Kansas; Chicago, Illinois; and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Between 1840 and 1920 about a million and a half Swedes emigrated to North America. In her study of Swedish immigrant artists and their patronage systems, historian Mary Towley Swanson identified a particularly strong network of uprooted artists working in the Swedish communities of the American Midwest, in both rural counties and urban centers. Swanson found that the creation of new visual art helped Swedish immigrants assimilate into American society at the same time they maintained strong ties to Sweden.² Birger Sandzén provides a textbook example of that dynamic in his relocating to Kansas with the intention of exploring the American West and Old Mexico while saving up his salary to move back home to Sweden. Although Sandzén kept

Lindsborg as his home base even as his sphere of influence in the UNited States expanded, the constant letters to family in Sweden, a few extended visits, and recognition by the Swedish government in awarding the artist the Order of the North Star medal in 1940 serve to demonstrate that Sandzén's loyalties to his homeland remained ever strong.

However, during the first years of Sandzén's sojourn in the middle of America, he became serious about creating an environment in which the arts flourished and in creating an influential midwestern arts culture. In a 1916 letter to his former student, Oscar Jacobson, Sandzén shared his thoughts:

I feel more and more that we Western artists have to work out our own artistic salvation quite independently of the East. We can not expect any support. We have to do the great work that is to be done ourselves. I believe our contribution to our national art will be something of real value by and by.³

Going forward, Sandzén intentionally set out to develop an American art, attuned to a national need just as his Artists League mentors had been. Later in 1916 Sandzén delivered a lecture on "Art in the Southwest" at the Wichita library auditorium. The local paper reviewed the talk in detail and subtitled the article "Birger Sandzen, Who Wants Culture More Than Wealth."⁴ The journalist began with the striking announcement that "Kansas Stands the Best Chance to Waken Nation," and proceeded to explain that the artist had a vision for the future, that "It is his dream for Kansas and America that each town and city should have a "Hall of Beauty" devoted to the fine arts, not only painting, but music, story telling and dramatics."⁵ Even in desperate times of the Great Depression, the arts did flourish in the prairie lands with regular concerts performed and art exhibitions organized. "Art for All" became a catchphrase in Kansas by the 1930s, stemming from efforts of local artists to offer affordable paintings and prints so that every citizen could have original art in their own homes for a richly cultured way of life.

Birger Sandzén and the Midwest

Sven Birger Sandzén was born in the rural parish of Blidsberg where his father served as pastor in



Birger Sandzén at right with 3 classmates including Carl Lotave at far left, circa 1891, Sandzén Archives, BSMG

the Lutheran church, in the Västergötland agricultural province of Sweden on February 5, 1871. The family relocated to and settled in the Järpås parish in the same province six years later. Birger and his two older brothers, Carl and Gustaf, were brought up by parents who valued all the fine arts. Reverend Johan Peter Sandzén played the violin and wrote poetry, while the boys' mother Caroline had learned French and watercolor painting and encouraged the practice of language skills and art-making in the family home. When Birger turned eight, he was given his first watercolor set and when nine, allowed to take drawing lessons from his

father's assistant pastor, Gustaf Lundblad. In 1881, when Sandzén was ten years old, he enrolled at a preparatory school in the cathedral town of Skara, about 17 miles away from home. He attended Skara College and graduated with distinction in 1890, earning a classical education complete with several languages, music studies, botany, along with drawing and painting under professor Olaf Erlandsson (1845-1916).

The summer following graduation, Sandzén took watercolor instruction from Regina Kylberg- Bobeck, and then in the fall, began a course of study in French and Esthetics at the prestigious Lund University. However, after just one semester, the young man informed his parents that he wished to pursue a career as a professional artist. At that time in Sweden, there was just a single avenue open for training in the visual arts, enrollment in the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, which provided the sole entree into consideration for the monarchy's limited art commissions. Sandzén embarked upon an uncertain life as an artist travelling to the capital city in January of 1891 to undertake the long process of daily drawing for the Academy's entrance examinations. While waiting impatiently for word of acceptance, Sandzén registered at the Tekniska Högskolan [Trades University], a school for architects and craftsmen.⁶ It is likely that Sandzén first met Arvid Nyholm in the technical school, a Stockholm-bred young man who was ostensibly studying architecture but "yearned to be able to draw figures other than those defined by geometric lines."⁷ Nyholm had gotten to know Anders Zorn at the Royal Academy when enrolled in 1889,

and is believed to be among those who orchestrated the highly-regarded portrait painter into offering private lessons in 1890. Zorn agreed and ordered the prospective students “to rent a studio, hire a model and go to work!”⁸ This plan was the seed of an Artists League school, with free classes led by painters Zorn and Richard Bergh, and renowned sculptor Per Hasselberg, opening up to the public in the fall of 1891. Sandzén, Nyholm, and four others including Carl Lotave were in the right place at the perfect time to be a part of a new, egalitarian approach to art education, training, and public access.

Lessons with Zorn began in October in studio space on Norra Smedjegatan [North Smith Street] and an excited Birger reported home to his father on all the advice Zorn dispensed:

Zorn came up to see us today when we were ready to begin. He asked one of us to see his palette after the colors were laid out and von Henning had, as usual, laid out 14-15 colors. Zorn asked him why he needed such a lot of colors for such a small thing as that [street urchin] model. Thereupon Zorn told us to put out just a few colors that he suggested. Zorn doesn't want you to mix too many colors.

*... You'll soon notice that you're not dealing with an ordinary person: How completely original and brilliant he is!*⁹

Zorn's methods left a deep impression on Sandzén, from the limited color palette to his hands-on teaching practice. Birger described painting progress on the class's second model, an American girl, about how “Zorn stood for about 20 minutes leaning over my shoulder when I started my painting” and then demonstrated directly on Sandzén's canvas how to get “a simple natural and beautiful effect” with color placement and relationships of warmer and cooler tones to achieve certain lighting effects.¹⁰ Sandzén's canvas *Rosa Bragoli* dated October 1891 must have been this second portrait done, with the ochre skin tones described in the letter home. The brushstrokes on the painting are characteristic of Anders Zorn's bravura style, and there is no doubt his hand contributed to the creation of this portrait.

While enjoying the almost intoxicating developments in Stockholm's art circles throughout 1891, with Artist League public exhibitions and open

studio instruction, Sandzén continued to take private drawing lessons and sit for Royal Academy entrance exams, competing with other hopefuls for high placement scores. Writing his father in November, Sandzén described the process:

*Our test drawing continues daily. Those [who are] test drawing have been reduced to 19. ...A son of Markus Larsson wants in. If he can't help himself, it seems to me that his father's name would do it. ...I have the number 3 on my drawings. The finished drawings are taken charge of by the attendant. When all the tests are clear, they are submitted to the proper authorities for examination. After the best numbers have been separated out, notice is given through sealed and numbered name slips.*¹¹

There is no record of Sandzén being invited to enroll at the Royal Academy, but the young painter had Zorn's example to follow right along with the charismatic portraitist's outspoken belief that Academy training was not necessary for a successful career.¹² Arguing with his brother in weighing the importance of Academy acceptance, Sandzén stressed that he would miss out on important opportunities learning from Zorn and Bergh if he would enroll in the formal course. Looking forward to a complete, uninterrupted free semester ahead with Bergh and Hasselberg, “that many would pay dearly for,” Sandzén points out that, “The best value of our lessons is proved by the fact that such real Academicians and actual enemies of Bergh or Bergh's opinions as Cederström and Malmström advised students who are in their last year at the Academy, “Don't hesitate to apply to paint for Bergh.””¹³



Rosa Bragoli by Birger Sandzén (1871-1954), 1891, oil on canvas, 21 ½ x 16 in., Greenough Collection, BSMG

As a whole, the radical Artist League members were passionate about their country's landscape and the people in it. Many of the artists were known to enjoy long walks and painting *en plein air*. Sandzén fit in this environment comfortably, continuing to paint with his mentors through the following year of 1892. At some point during that year Sandzén must have been commissioned to paint and construct a standing screen with seven panels of landscape scenes. The screen reveals popular late 19th-century trends of *Japonisme*, the English Arts and Crafts movement, and the tenets of Swedish National Romanticism. Each landscape vignette shows a recognizable site that Sandzén



Untitled 7-panel folding screen, Birger Sandzén (1871-1954), 1892, oil on canvas mounted to board, 69 ¾ x 150 x 1 in., Greenough Collection, BSMG

sketched on his hikes through the countryside, with pencil and ink drawings of the same subjects remaining in the family collection and now residing in the Sandzén Memorial Gallery. Bruno Liljefors also completed some similar painted screens on commission in the 1880s and '90s, so it is possible his work influenced the younger artist, who admired Liljefors' naturalistic scenes and Japonist manner.¹⁴ The screen resurfaced in a March 1987 London auction of Scandinavian art.¹⁵ The artist's daughter, Margaret Sandzén Greenough (1909-1993), arranged to place the winning bid and have the piece shipped home to the Sandzén Memorial Gallery.

In 1893, Sandzén returned home to Järpås to serve required military duty time in His Majesty's Mounted Life Guard Company of the Royal Västergötland Regiment [*Lifkompaniet af Kungl. Västergöta Regiment*]. Living in tents with other conscripts was not pleasant but the drilling and parades were soon over. By November that year, Birger was teaching, had sold pictures and finished several portrait commissions, and was able to visit Richard Bergh in Varberg, known for its west coast sandy beaches. Sandzén wrote his brother Karl that Bergh had declared some six paintings of his to be "sensitive and original" and encouraged Sandzén to show them.¹⁶ The young painter proudly shared he had followed through and had six paintings on exhibition at the Göteborg Art Association, which may have been his first public showing. Birger also mentioned to his brother that he would be in Paris the first part of the next year.

Sanzén enrolled in the Paris studio of Edmond Francois Aman-Jean (1858-1936), a noted Symbolist artist recommended by Richard Bergh. Arriving in January the young Swede found himself surrounded

by Americans, which may have inspired the correspondence initiated that spring to the president of Bethany College in Kansas, the Rev. Dr. Carl Swensson. The professor had written the wildly popular *I Sverige [In Sweden]* in 1891, and actively recruited Swedish faculty for the American college. Swensson quizzed the young artist extensively, asking about his piano skills, his tenor quality, his personal habits, and his religious outlook – Sober? Lutheran?¹⁷ Sandzén was offered a faculty position teaching modern languages and voice for \$40-\$45

dollars a month, plus (heated) room and board. Conferring with his father Sandzén speculated, "On the whole, it would be good to be in America 3-4 years, if not longer, to find out what I can accomplish on my own."¹⁸ Birger's father responded to the news of his son's relocating to the other side of the world fairly calmly, but anxiously wrote with advice not to sit too long, not to make any sudden movements, avoid overexertion, to take care of his stomach, and, to try and cure chronic tonsillitis "by gargling with salt water, rubdowns and changing your socks."¹⁹

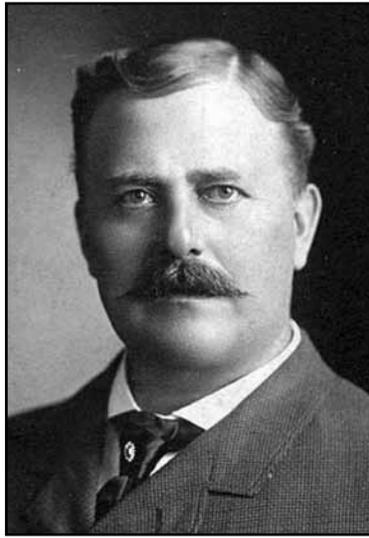
Sanzén arrived in Lindsborg in September, 1894 to teach modern languages and voice, being as he was an accomplished tenor. The painter Olof Grafström had taken charge of Bethany's art department in 1893 and taught the painting and drawing courses. The twenty-three-year-old artist intended to stay and explore the Southwest a few years, but ended in having shaped the cultural history of Kansas and influenced the spread of public art programs throughout the heartlands of the country. As the artist's daughter Margaret reflected in later years, when the young man came to the middle of the United States to settle in the Swedish farming community, "he found that a great deal needed to be done to bring art closer to the people" as "there was very little interest in art throughout the state."²⁰ Sandzén felt the need for fine art and good design in every aspect of everyday life, subscribing to the Swedish motto *Vackrare Vardagsvaror* [More Beautiful Everyday Goods].²¹ As an extension of this conviction, Sandzén firmly believed original art belonged in public schools for every child to grow and learn about a world fashioned with creative beauty. The many long-running art exhibitions and democratic organizations Sandzén established over decades contributed to art collections being formed in grade schools as well

as universities throughout Kansas and neighboring states. By 1917 the artist's efforts were acknowledged in the Washington DC-based *American Magazine of Art*, which headed an article with the statement, "Birger Sandzen has lit little candles of art knowledge and art appreciation throughout the Midwest."²²

Jonas Olof Grafström

Looking back on his first years at Bethany and relating the history of the school's art department, Sandzén wrote a letter to Dr. Ernest F. Pihlblad, president of the college. From a 1942 vantage point Sandzén penned:

*Dear Ernest, Some time ago you asked me to write a brief report on our art school. I enclose a sketch. ...In 1893 the art school developed a more professional character when Olaf Grafström, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, Sweden, who for some years had lived and painted in San Francisco, was called to take charge of the instruction. Olaf Grafström was a gifted painter and able teacher, mainly known for his landscapes, especially motives from his native Norrland, and for his altar paintings which have been placed in many churches of the Augustana Synod. The first College building was for about ten years used as a studio. ... In 1897 Olaf Grafström was called to teach in the art department of Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois, where he served with considerable distinction for many years.*²³



Jonas Olof Grafström, circa 1900

Although Grafström and Sandzén had very different training courses in Stockholm, they did have an affection for Anders Zorn in common. Grafström finished the traditional course of study at the Royal Academy as Zorn rebelling and cutting ties, but the two artists spent time together rambling over Sweden's northern countryside to paint what they saw. They had the same sense of adventure, willing to try new ways of doing things and explore the unknown. Grafström welcomed the new faculty recruit, collecting Sandzén from the McPherson train station to bring him to the college and his room. The first letter home to Järpås relayed his impressions of

the school and the people he would be working with, and having to sing for supper the first evening there, performing an impromptu concert in the dining hall.²⁴ The second letter home reported that Sandzén was allowed to teach watercolor and drawing, and was already planning to paint portraits of Dr. Swensson and the pastor from nearby Salina as part of his duties. The artist taught French (in English) every day and had one voice student. Sandzén told his father, "I'm very happy here. People are kind, easygoing, and friendly."²⁵

Grafström and Sandzén spent two years working together in Lindsborg painting and enjoying outdoor pursuits. The untitled pastel of wilderness waterfalls by Grafström now held in a local, private collection originally belonged to the Swensson family and is believed to have hung in the college president's office for many years. A deep appreciation for being in nature and observing seasonal changes was a bond between the two Swedish artists. Sandzén wrote home that, "Out on the prairie a gaudy display of glowing colors: gold "buffalo grass," big sun flowers done blooming, some kind of tall plants with blood-red leaves, etc., etc. Grafström and I go on long walks out there. I'm the only one brave enough to go walking with Grafström. He always walks very far and at a tremendous speed. He almost never walks in any other way. If he can't get any one to go with him he goes alone. He's usually out before day break."²⁶ In later years, Sandzén shared his early observations of the Midwestern landscape, pointing out



A Western Motif (Mt. Thielson, Oregon) by Olof Grafström (1855-1933), 1897, oil on canvas, 49 ½ x 66 in., BSMG

“The atmosphere is different here than it is in Sweden, where I was used to painting. The colors are greens and blues. But here the air is so thin that the colors become more vivid and the shadows lighter.”²⁷

Carl (Gustafsson) Lotave

When Grafström decamped to Rock Island, Illinois, to develop an art department at Augustana College, Sandzén might have moved to take charge of the art classes at Bethany. However, Dr. Swensson felt the college still needed him to teach languages and planned a recruiting trip back to Sweden over the summer break of 1897, taking Sandzén along. The artist tracked down his Artist League classmate Carl Gustafsson, a “gifted artist from Lidköping who had gone on to study in Paris at the Academie Colarossi,” and convinced him to come to Kansas.²⁸

Carl Lotave had been Carl Gustafsson until he came to Bethany College, where President Swensson thought there were too many Gustafssons in the area and suggested he change names, as many Swedes did. Sandzén came up with the idea of combining the nickname “Lotta” and “Gustave” to Lotave which to his mind sounded both French and distinguished.²⁹

In the spring of 1899, Birger Sandzén, Carl Lotave, and G.N. Malm (1869-1928) established the first Swedish American annual art exhibition in the Midwest, coinciding with the spring performance of Handel’s *Messiah* oratorio at Bethany College during Eastertide. Sandzén himself was the featured tenor soloist through 1905, and was much affected by the crowds that poured into Lindsborg by train for the concert every year. Sandzén described the story of the undertaking in the essay “Our First Art Exhibit at Bethany College” [*Vår första konstutställning vid Bethany College*] for his book *With Brush and Pencil [Med Pensel och Penna]*. The three artists were gathered in Sandzén’s room the evening before the first scheduled concert talking about all the people coming to town and wondering how much money was raised from visitors. The idea came up of having an art show for which a modest admission price could be charged. “An intense struggle developed as we only had the one night to accomplish the task. We plundered our friends and acquaintances and all of Bethany College of houseplants, rugs, draperies... and as many pictures as could get reasonable lighting.³⁰ The three men worked all night, anxious



Untitled (Scene near Lindsborg) by Carl (Gustafsson) Lotave (1872-1924), 1897, oil on canvas, 12 ¾ x 16 in., Gift of Margaret Eddy, through inheritance from B.G. and Sarah Gröndal, BSMG

for the crowds to appreciate the Herculean effort and wondrous art works. However, the sole visitor was an elderly woman who could not see well and reached out to feel the paintings. Lotave was “mightily wrathful” and wild schemes such as armed sentries directing traffic flow were plotted. Cooler heads prevailed and a plan of printing advertising flyers to inundate the train depot was undertaken. Victory was theirs. The next afternoon “everybody had one or more of our fliers in their hands. Throwing them away

didn’t help. You were immediately seen by one of our pages and given another.”³¹ The hall was packed and the artists walked among the visitors “serving as guides and art catalogues,” and astonishing those who were “absolutely amazed to find a real, small art exhibition out here in the prairie.”³²

Soon dubbed the *Midwest Art Exhibition*, the shows grew larger every year, with more artists participating and, as of 2019, in its 121st year. The on-going success set the precedent for Sandzén establishing other annuals and long-running organizations. Sandzén aided Chicago Swedish American artists in setting up annual exhibitions from 1905, and started a few more art organizations, himself.

Soon after the first spring exhibition, Carl Lotave moved to Colorado Springs where he enjoyed considerable patronage as a portrait painter and plein air work in the mountains. The artist moved to Santa Fe where he worked on murals in the historic Governor’s Palace while exploring more of the Southwest. Lotave’s next move was to New York where he became a popular magazine illustrator, but died there 1924 after a long period of illness.³³ Lotave had his ashes interred at the top of Pikes Peak in the Colorado Rocky Mountain range.

G. N. (Gustaf Nathaniel) Malm

After choosing a career as a painter, G. N. Malm emigrated from Jönköping, Sweden, in 1893 to Omaha, Nebraska. While there he married and began establishing himself as an artist and a writer for Swedish American publications. Bethany College’s president Carl Swensson noticed and recruited the family to move to Lindsborg where they became integral to the community. Malm was a dynamic leader of Lindsborg’s Swedish Dancers troupe, served as secretary of the Messiah Oratorio Society, and ran



Untitled (Swedish coast) by G.N. (Gustaf Nathaniel) Malm (1869-1928), 1896, oil on canvas, 20 x 37 in., Gift of the family of August Palmquist, BSMG

a downtown business, the Malm Brothers paint store, while developing a decorative stencil system. G.N. Malm showed in many of the *Midwest Art Exhibitions* after taking part in the inaugural effort, and several times was juried in to Chicago venues. The artist also contributed to the McPherson High School annuals that began in 1911, with one of his paintings chosen to build the school district's permanent collection. Sandzén included Malm in the ambitious *An Exhibition of Paintings by Some Artists of the Southwest* that first opened at the McPherson High School in October, 1916, and then went on tour, sent to Oscar Jacobson to display at the University of Oklahoma in Norman that December. Malm went on to write the play *Härute [Out There]* about the assimilation of Swedish Americans as a positive process in forging new cultural identities, meshing old country ways with new – processes already at work within the art practices of Lindsborg.

Oscar Brousse Jacobson

Oscar Jacobson's career encompassed an astonishing degree of cultural meshing and assimilation, as he directed the art programs at the University of Oklahoma and was among the first to promote Native American artists. The pairing of indigenous culture with immigrant Swedish world view was as unlikely as it was successful in bringing attention to the art of the Kiowa Six and the profound effects artmaking could have on society.³⁴

Always adventurous, Jacobson immigrated with his family from Västervik in the Småland province of Sweden in 1890 to join the eldest two sons. Oscar was the only one of seven siblings who did not stay in the Lindsborg area but traveled the globe. Jacobson studied with Sandzén at Bethany College, enrolling in the associated Bethany Academy art classes when he was just thirteen. Despite the age difference Sandzén and Jacobson had much in common and often ranged

over the prairie hunting and sketching together. Graduating from the college in 1903, the artist found a position as attaché to the Royal Swedish Commission at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Jacobson's day job was assisting with the art loans, unpacking, sorting, and organizing a jury process for the Swedish Pavilion. At night, he played a rider in the Wild West Show in which humorist Will Rogers (1879-1935) also performed.

As Sandzén summarized years later in a letter to then-current Bethany College president, Ernest Pihlblad, "The Swedish Building of the World's Fair of St. Louis, consisting of a main hall and two wings, built in the style of a country manor house in Sweden after drawings of Ferdinand Boberg, was at the close of the Fair bought by the United States minister to Sweden, Mr. W.W. Thomas, who was an intimate friend of Carl Swensson, and presented to Bethany College."³⁵ First used for the Domestic Arts classes, the Pavilion was converted into the art department and displayed art exhibitions, as Sandzén considered it to be "an attractive building with good light and ample wall space."³⁶

Jacobson earned a master of fine arts degree from Yale and joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma in 1915, following another Bethany graduate, Samuel Holmberg. While leading the art department, Jacobson modelled his practice on his mentor Birger Sandzén's egalitarian approach to sharing art with everyone. Jacobson built up a museum and admirable university collection of Southwestern art, and regularly organized exhibitions with regional artists. The United States Department of the Interior awarded Jacobson a citation for



Winter Forest in Sweden by Oscar Brousse Jacobson (1882-1966), circa 1914, oil on canvas, 18 x 24 in., Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Gift of Hal Johnson

outstanding service in preserving, encouraging, and developing arts of the American Indian.

In 1940, Jacobson was Bethany College's featured artist in that year's *Midwest Art Exhibition*. Around that time, Sandzén reflected that over the past decades, "The majority of the graduates of the Bethany art school become art teachers in the public schools, colleges or universities."³⁷

Fritz Samuel Holmberg

Sam Holmberg (1885-1911) arrived in Lindsborg from Helsingborg, Sweden, in March of 1902, joining his five siblings and to study art at Bethany College with Birger Sandzén. When Sandzén went to Sweden on sabbatical in 1905, Holmberg taught in the professor's stead and arranged for paintings to be sent to Chicago that year for the first Swedish American Art Association exhibition. In a letter to Bethany's piano professor, Oscar Thorsen (1881-1968), who was also abroad, Holmberg reported that he had read in the *Hemlandet* Swedish American paper that five of Sandzén's paintings were juried in, two of Holmbergs, but none from G.N. Malm.³⁸

When Holmberg's older brother Fred became head of the music department at the University of Oklahoma (OU) Sandzén suggested that art should be taught at the university as well, and that no teacher than Fred's brother could be better suited. In 1908, Sam Holmberg went to Oklahoma and established an art department. Sadly, Holmberg only had a few years directing the program before illness struck and he died in Lindsborg during the summer of 1911 at age 26. His Bethany classmate Oscar Jacobson followed in Holmberg's footsteps at OU doing his best to carry on his friend's "tradition of artistic honesty" through enlarging the art programs, establishing an active exhibition schedule (often with the help of his Kansas colleagues), and founding what is now known as Fred Jones Jr. Museum on Art on campus.³⁹

Arvid Frederick Nyholm

Sandzén's sabbatical to Sweden and Western Europe over 1905-06 coincided with the beginnings of a long tradition of Swedish American art shows in Chicago. While away from Lindsborg, Sandzén received a letter from Arvid Nyholm, another of Zorn's students in the 1891 Artists League studio class in Stockholm. Nyholm wrote on fresh letterhead of the newly-created



Self Portrait by Arvid Nyholm (1866-1927), 1909, oil on canvas, 20 x 15 in., Greenough Collection, BSMG

Swedish American Art Association, with himself listed as "SEC'Y" at the top of the page, to inform Sandzén the Association has arranged to hold an exhibition in October at Anderson Art Co. [Anderson Galleries] on Wabash Avenue. Nyholm suggests that Sandzén should have his friends back in Lindsborg pack up and arrange for transport of eight canvasses to Chicago, immediately. He also added a personal appreciation, writing "Thank you for the kind mention in the *Hemlandet* article!"⁴⁰ This was the newspaper that was publishing a travelogue of art reviews by Sandzén written as the Kansas artist proceeded through New York and on to Europe. Sandzén did mangae to arrange to exhibit six paintings, and his student

Samuel Holmberg (1885-1911) who took over classes while Sandzén away and GN Malm also submitted several to the show. The new exhibition plans sparked interest in Sweden too, with Zorn, Larsson, and Liljefors sending several canvases for display. However, despite widespread interest, sales did not meet expectations and so the exhibition was not repeated for some years after.

Soon after Zorn's 1891 studio sessions began, Nyholm moved his family to settle in New York, where he set up a studio and was in demand as a portraitist, known for accentuating the unique visual character of his sitters rather than repeat a formulaic style of his own. Nyholm exhibited at a variety of venues such as the New York Water Color Society and the National Academy of Design.⁴¹ The Nyholms relocated to Chicago in 1903, where Arvid immediately involved himself with all the art societies such as the Palette and Chisel Club and the Chicago Artists Society. Camaraderie with other artists, especially Swedish Americans, was important to Nyholm and he worked long hours on organizing and participating in exhibitions from Illinois and Kansas to Sweden.

Chicago's **Swedish American Art Association Annuals** did not get going until March 11, 1911, hosted by the *Svenska Klubben* (Swedish Club) and with enormous effort by the club's president, financier Charles S. Peterson. Again Nyholm and Charles Hallberg organized submissions of art from all over the country with 26 artists juried in, showing 98 paintings and sculpture. John F. Carlson (1st prize for *Solitude*), Olof Grafstrom, Charles Hallberg, Afred Jansson, B. J. O. Nordfeldt, Arvid Nyholm (second

prize for a self-portrait), Birger Sandzén (third prize for *Early Moonrise*), and Charles Haag (1st prize in sculpture) were among those exhibiting. In 1912, prizes went to Nyhom, Sandzén, and Jansson, respectively. After the exhibition's smashing success Peterson suggested that Sandzén send a gift painting in thanks to Chicago's mayor Carter Harrison "as acknowledgment of his kindly interest in the Swedish artists," and the Lindsborg artist obliged.⁴²

Sandezén was considered an essential Chicago artist since the 1905 show and was regularly invited to exhibit, serve as jury member, and give lectures at the Swedish Club openings in following years. Many of the Chicago-based artists also participated in the AIC's annuals. In the 1913 exhibition there, Nyholm showed a few oils done on a lengthy visit to France including *The Old Fountain* listed in the program flyer. It is likely this was the painting now in the Sandzén Gallery collection known as *Bretagne*.

Charles Edward Hallberg

The Chicago marine painter Charles Hallberg was also one of the essential, original organizers of the Swedish American Art Association of 1905, continuing in that role for the annuals held at the Swedish Club until his death at age 85. The 1941 catalogue included notice of a Memorial Exhibit arranged during the 22nd annual Swedish American exhibition.

For the second Swedish American annual of 1912, Sandzén was engaged to deliver a talk during the opening days, and Alfrida filled her mother in with his doings over the trip once Birger arrived home. He was picked up at the train station by Hallberg and his daughter and brought to the Hallberg home to stay, where Mrs. Hallberg had a wonderful dinner waiting. Even at the last minute, "Hallberg had to go to the Club and hang pictures" while Birger dined sumptuously. That evening, "Birger dressed in tails and went up to the reception for the artists and club members...Birger was also asked to say a few words." The whole of Saturday was taken up with visiting the exhibition, and on Sunday, "Birger went with Hallbergs to the church in Austin" and then "the artists visited Arvid Nyholm's studio" in the afternoon, and Sandzén's address given that evening.⁴³ Soon after, the Lindsborg newspaper announced that, "The celebrated Swedish artist Charles A. [sic] Hallberg of Chicago is expected here Messiah week. He will



Charles Hallberg, 1908, Sandzén Archives, BSMG

enter some of his pictures in the Swedish-American Art Exhibit being arranged at Bethany in connection with the Messiah festivities."⁴⁴

Hallberg was born in Göteborg, Sweden, and at an early age discovered a talent for drawing and color. When he was 17, Hallberg signed on to a British brig and went to sea, serving under various flags for ten years. In 1883 he came to America to sail the Great Lakes, always carrying painting supplies around with him. In 1890, he

settled down in Chicago and worked as a janitor for a bank and apartment building. Hallberg exhibited for the first at the AIC in 1900 in a group show, then had a solo exhibition, *Exhibition of Paintings by Charles Edward Hallberg of Chicago*, March 1 - 21, 1906.

Hallberg's seascapes were always quite popular, "having the advantage of pleasing both the artists and the public taste" with his multifaceted "marine motifs depicting storms, sparkling moonlight, waves calm and chaotic, and clouds in many forms... the impressions of nature."⁴⁵ The artist exhibited many times over the years in Bethany's *Midwest Art Exhibition* and Sandzén regularly mailed Hallberg Christmas cards and copies of Messiah programs. Hallberg was a generous artist, sending a painting as a personal gift to Sandzén and his wife just to remember him by.⁴⁶ Years later in 1933, Hallberg gave his *Morning After an Atlantic Storm* oil to the Bethany College art collection.⁴⁷

Alfred Jansson

Alfred Jansson (1863-1931) remained in Chicago for a full career after immigrating in 1889 from Sweden with a mural commission for the Swedish Building planned for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Along with Nyholm, he was deeply involved in the Swedish American art circles and the Association's annuals. Jansson replied to Birger Sandzén's letter following the celebrated 1912 Swedish American exhibition at the Svenska Klubben:

*The exhibition is over and I Congratulate you on your great Success in taking a prize and selling so many. Your pictures have been admired by every one and They are great. It is a pleasure to me to send you one of my Paintings and the reason I have delayed writing is that I have been undecided what to send. I took one of the small winter scenes I had in the show.*⁴⁸

As so often happened between artists who appreciated each other's style and techniques, Janssen and Sandzén exchanged work for their personal collections. Jansson's work appeared in all the Swedish American exhibitions in Chicago at the Swedish Club and the Art Institute (winning the 1914 Clyde M. Carr Prize there), and over the next decade, Sandzén occasionally invited Jansson to show in the *Midwest Art Exhibition* at Bethany College, such as for the 1927 annual in which Jansson showed two landscapes. The college purchased Jansson's *March Day* (1915) now in the Sandzén Gallery permanent collection.



Autumn Landscape by Alfred Jansson (1863-1931), 1921, oil on canvas, 11 x 14 in., Hillstrom Museum of Art, purchased with funds donated by Dawn and Edward Michael

McPherson High School Annual Exhibitions

The McPherson High School principal organized a school art show in 1911 and it went well enough that local art dealer Carl J. Smalley (1885-1965) was asked to run the next one. McPherson annuals went on until 1937, with Smalley and Sandzén collaborating to borrow works from contemporary artists along with interesting works of Old Masters. A weekend program with the grade schoolers was developed, with lectures and concerts included for a nickel or dime admission price. The money all went towards purchasing a piece or two from the exhibition to build up an art collection to be displayed around the McPherson schools. Many of the Chicago artists showed both in McPherson and at Bethany College annuals over the years, along with other invited artists including Taos Society artists and the Regionalists Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood, and John Steuart Curry, who were all artist friends of Sandzén and aided his goal of having all young people grow up surrounded by original works of art. The McPherson school district art collection became so large and distributed over so many different buildings that a gallery was included in a museum to share the collection with a larger public.

Charles (Karl Oskar) Haag

Sculptor Charles Haag (1867-1933) showed *Woman with Basket* at the 1925 McPherson Art Exhibit along with four other of his terracotta pieces. A letter from

Haag to Birger Sandzén earlier that year reveals the artists had not met in person: "Only great men are kind and I hope someday I will be able to show you how much I appreciate your kindness. If ever you come to Chicago let me know. I have long ago desired to meet you."⁴⁹ An Oklahoma acquaintance of Sandzén's purchased one of the other Haag statuettes from the exhibition but as of September had only paid a portion of the sales price. Sandzén wrote to friend and art dealer Carl

Smalley and mentioned the distress this was causing the artist. "The poor fellow is desperately hard up and writes one letter after letter. I wish he could get into portraits, decorative garden furniture, or something that could be turned into money. I believe some of his statuettes are at the Art Institute at present."⁵⁰

C. Raymond Jonson

1914 appears to be the first time Raymond Jonson (originally Johnson, 1891-1982) was invited to show at Bethany College's *Midwest Art Exhibition*. The artist was a student of B.J.O. Nordfeldt in Chicago and exhibited in Lindsborg and in other the McPherson High School annuals many times over the ensuing years as his teacher did. Jonson's *Pierrot* oil in this exhibition was shown 1917 and purchased by the exhibition organizer Carl Smalley. The painting was a gift to the Sandzén Gallery from the McPherson art dealer's widow, Louise.



Untitled by Charles Oskar Haag (1867-1933), circa 1920, painted earthenware, 13 x 5 ½ x 4 in., Greenough Collection, BSMG

Jonson was active in Chicago's art circles and became secretary of a short-lived international art organization, Cor Ardens, in 1921. This brotherhood of ardent hearts aimed to bring together artists around the world in hosting exhibitions without juries, prizes, or sales, and to work toward creating a universal museum to which artists would donate art of their own choosing. The inaugural exhibition held at the Arts Club of Chicago in November, 1921, presented 38 paintings and sculptures including the work of Jonson, Sandzén, and Walter Ufer (1876-1936) of the Taos Society of Artists and a friend of both Nordfeldt and Sandzén, both of whom were elected as associate members of the Taos Society the following year, in

1922.

Smoky Hill Art Club

By 1913 when so many exhibitions were running annually across the Midwest, Birger Sandzén resolved to galvanize a membership into intentional collecting through a subscription pool. Bethany College's *Daisy* yearbook of 1913 stated the Smoky Hill Art Club was being established on campus and would take \$1 per year member dues "for the purpose of promoting arts and crafts in Lindsborg and vicinity. The society endeavors to raise a fund for the support of Bethany Art School, to build up a good permanent Art Collection and to popularize good art."⁵¹ Over time, the club also sponsored the college's annual *Midwestern Art Exhibition*. By 1942 the club grew to 200 members strong, with funds purchasing about 30 oil paintings, and 200 etchings, lithographs, and engravings for the college collection (now part of the Sandzén Gallery permanent collection). The Smoky Hill Art Club continued to buy fine art, art supplies, and art books for the college library through 1948, following Sandzén's retirement in 1946.

B.J.O. (Bror Julius Olsson) Nordfeldt

B.J.O. Nordfeldt (1878-1955) first connected with Sandzén after the 1912 Swedish American exhibition at the Chicago's Swedish Club. A long-standing friendship began with a few letters and an invitation to the 1913 Bethany College Eastertide *Midwest Art Exhibition*. In the fall of the same year, Nordfeldt also showed work in the McPherson High School exhibition, and his February 11 letter to Sandzén was printed verbatim in the exhibition brochure:

*My dear Mr. Sandzén....I heartily agree with you as to the present state of American art, and the need for the fight that has already begun. Last year at the Swedish Club I saw a few of your canvases, which seemed to me a vital and personal expression of the modern movement. I hope that I may see more of your work in the future.*⁵²

Being an immigrant Swede greatly influenced the trajectory of artist B.J.O. Nordfeldt's career, and his connection to Kansas artists came from an extremely strong Swedish American network. Although Nordfeldt ultimately was able to transcend his ethnic subculture to establish a wider public name



Pierrot by Raymond Jonson, 1914, oil on canvas; 44 ½ x 39 in., Gift of Mrs. C. J. Smalley, BSMG

for himself, it was largely through connections with others within the Swedish-American community that enriched and encouraged Nordfeldt's development as a successful American artist.

Born Bror Julius Olsson in Tullstorp, Skåne province of southern Sweden, in 1891 the family emigrated to the United States, settling in the Swedish neighborhoods around Andersonville, Chicago. At age 14 young Nordfeldt got a job as a typesetter for *Hemlandet*, a Swedish-language newspaper for which Sandzén often wrote. Attending the school of the Art

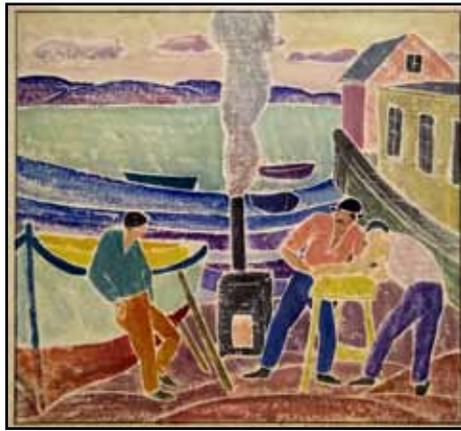
Institute of Chicago (AIC) from 1896-98 was a turning point, as he connected with other young American art students and learned to communicate in English as well as in Swedish. Nordfeldt found financial success in his field and was able to travel extensively to Jonstorp in Sweden, to Paris, and then to London to study printmaking techniques with Frank Morley Fletcher (1846-1949). In January of 1908 the print room of the AIC curated *Etchings and Dry Points and Color Prints From Wood Blocks* by B. J. Olsson-Nordfeldt, marking his first important solo exhibition. The earliest known record of Nordfeldt in Kansas is mention in Lindsborg's Swedish-language newspaper, the *Lindsborg-Posten*, in which Nordfeldt's mission is reported that the "svensk-amerikanske artisten Bror Julius Olson-Nordfeldt" had just been employed as an illustrator by *Harper's Weekly* to make drawings overseas in Europe, including Sweden.⁵³

Nordfeldt returned to Chicago in 1911 with physician wife Margaret Doolittle, settling in just in time to participate in the so-called "First Exhibition of Swedish-American Artists" put on by the Swedish American Art Association March 12-26 at the Swedish Club. The planning committee consisted of Arvid Nyholm and Charles Hallberg, echoing the actual first 1905 exhibition, with Sandzén as a crucial advisor. Birger Sandzén wrote a lengthy review of the "second," 1912, Swedish American show at the Swedish Club, which was published in the 1913 *Prärieblomman* [*Prairie Flower*] annual, the Swedish-language book published yearly by the Augustana Book Concern in Rock Island.⁵⁴ Sandzen did not mention Nordfeldt's work in the article, but two of Nordfeldt's etchings are reproduced in the book.

1914 marks the beginning of Nordfeldt's summering in Provincetown, Massachusetts, developing a new method of creating color woodcut prints, the "white line" print. This technique allows all colors to be applied to the carved block at the same time, separated by deep grooves carved into the wood. The inked block is printed only once, rather than many times, layering colors one at a time. In 1916, as the gold medal winner of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915, Gustave Baumann (1881-1971) invited silver medal awardee Nordfeldt to show with his *Exhibition of American Block Prints and Wood Engravings* curated for the AIC in Chicago. Nordfeldt exhibited only "white line" color woodcuts.

Nordfeldt helped to organize the Provincetown Printmakers group. In 1918 it was the first American organization to promote the woodcut medium, as well as celebrate the "white line" practitioners. Nordfeldt continued to exhibit with the Provincetown Printmakers through the 1920s although he did not make any new designs after 1917.⁵⁵ Birger Sandzén's personal collection included Nordfeldt's white-line color woodcut impressions of *Argument* and *Mending the Boat*.

Nordfeldt did his bit for the war effort, applying his artistic skills and supervising the camouflaging of merchant ships in San Francisco in 1918. He worked with painter-architect William Penhallow Henderson



Mending the Boat by B.J.O. Nordfeldt (1878-1955), circa 1917, color woodcut, 11 x 12 in., Greenough Collection, BSMG

(1877-1943), who at the war's end invited the Swede to visit his home in Santa Fe. In 1919, Nordfeldt visited and enjoyed the artist colony so well he decided to stay, building a small adobe home next door to Gustave Baumann, who had earlier relocated from Chicago. The Nordfeldts remained in Santa Fe through 1937, but did a good deal of traveling and extended residencies for teaching stints around the country.

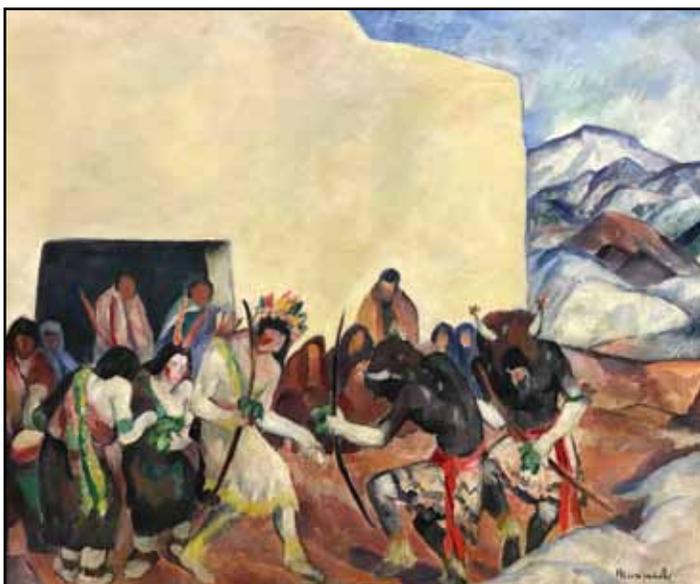
Nordfeldt's first painting completed in Santa Fe was *Buffalo Dance*, as noted on the back of a photograph

in the possession of the painter's widow, Emily Abbott Nordfeldt (1900-1989).⁵⁶ Sandzén traveled to Santa Fe in August of 1919 for an exhibition at the art museum, planning to visit all his New Mexico friends, Baumann, and Marsden Hartley (1877-1943). The Lindsborg artist was invited to the Nordfeldt home, where Nordfeldt himself cooked a delicious dinner for his guest.⁵⁷ In October that year, Sandzén sent an exhibition of Southwestern artists to Oscar Jacobson to show at the University of Oklahoma, including ten Sandzén works, two Marsden Hartley paintings, one Sheldon Parsons, and Nordfeldt's *Buffalo Dance*.

Nordfeldt's evolution as a printmaker owed much to his Kansas experiences with the open-handed sharing of techniques and exhibition invitations from artists in the state. The artist visited Wichita for extended periods during the 1930s, teaching and enjoying residencies for months at a time while staying with artist friends William Dickerson (1904-1972) and Edmund Davison (1877-1944). "Nordfeldt and Dickerson exchanged printmaking lessons, with Dickerson teaching Nordfeldt the process of lithography and Nordfeldt teaching Dickerson how to make etchings."⁵⁸

Broadmoor Art Academy

In 1915 Sandzén invited the Swedish American artist John F. Carlson who was director of the Woodstock School of Landscape, to show several oils in the McPherson High School annual exhibition. Although living in New York, Carlson participated in the Swedish American Chicago annuals and no doubt the artists became acquainted over those exhibitions. In turn, Carlson invited Sandzén to visit Colorado Springs and lecture at the newly opened Broadmoor Art Academy summer school that Carlson directed.



Buffalo Dance by B.J.O. Nordfeldt (1878-1955), circa 1919, oil on canvas, 27 x 32 in., Oscar Thorsen Collection, BSMG

In the summers of 1920 and 1921 following each lecture he presented the school with a set of his prints to spark interest in starting a printmaking program along with a public museum for showing collections. To further promote the medium in Colorado, Sandzén donated another set to the Chappell House art school and burgeoning Denver Art Museum collection housed there, in 1928.

The summers of 1923 and 1924, the Broadmoor Art Academy engaged Sandzén to teach landscape painting in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, which the Kansas artist enjoyed immensely. His former student Oscar Jacobson joined him from Oklahoma as the school's director the summer session of 1924. Sandzén regularly spent summer breaks in Colorado, hiking and sketching, but after teaching for the University of Denver's Chappell House art school in Estes Park the summer of 1925, it was only vacation time that was scheduled.

Sandzén was invited to teach his landscape painting workshops at the Utah State Agricultural College (now Utah State University), in Logan, for consecutive summers 1928, '29, and '30. Usually the Sandzén family would try and spend time relaxing in Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park after the classes in Utah were finished. Over the summer break of 1931 Sandzén traveled to the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and arrangements were made for B.J.O. Nordfeldt to teach landscape painting in Logan, Utah, in Sandzén's stead.

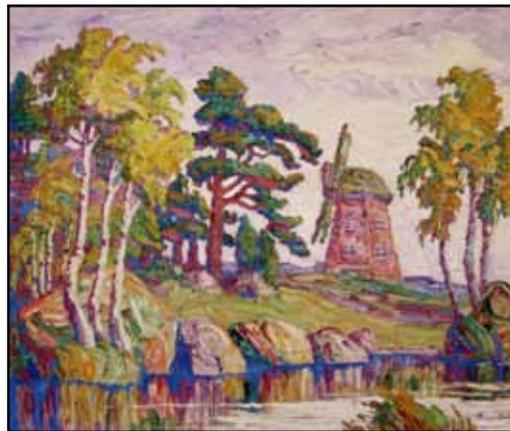
Carl Milles & Olga Granner Milles

In January, 1924, the three Kansas Sandzéns visited Birger's second solo exhibition at Babcock Gallery in New York City, and continued on to Sweden for an extended family visit. Invited to a tribute dinner in Stockholm once they landed, Birger and Alfrida met the sculptor Carl Milles (1875-1955) and his



Thawing Snow by John F. Carlson (1874-1945), circa 1930-3, oil on canvas mounted on wood panel, 12 x 16 in., Hillstrom Museum, Gift of Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom

to 1951. While in America, Milles donated several of the six renditions of the *Little Triton* bronze fountain cast in Stockholm in 1930, giving one to Cranbrook, one to the Mayo Clinic, and one to Birger Sandzén



Windmill in Sweden by Birger Sandzén (1871-1954), 1926, oil on canvas, 39 1/4 x 47 in., Greenough Collection, BSMG

wife Olga Granner Milles (1874-1967). The two artists immediately became fast friends and lifetime correspondents as their families spent time getting to know each other at the Milles' beautifully-appointed home, Millesgården, on the island of Lidingö near Stockholm.

Carl and Olga relocated to the United States for two decades while Carl served as an artist-in-residence and director of sculpture for the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Michigan, 1931

and three other Bethany College professors. Milles stipulated the fountain be installed in the side yard at the Sandzén home on Second Street when it was placed in 1935. In 1957 the fountain was moved to the courtyard and a place of honor at the Sandzén Gallery, as part of the museum's permanent collection. As it was not connected to a water supply at the Sandzén home, *Little Triton* was loaned to a Dallas centennial exhibition in 1936, packed very carefully by Lindsborg

woodcarver and cabinetmaker *John Altenborg* (1875-1946).⁵⁹

Milles and Sandzén exchanged examples of their work on a regular basis, so there are many of the sculptor's pieces in the Sandzén Gallery's collection, including the *American Bison* bronze and a reduced size sculpture of *Miss Missouri*, along with plaster plaques used in the production of a set of bronze doors for the capitol building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

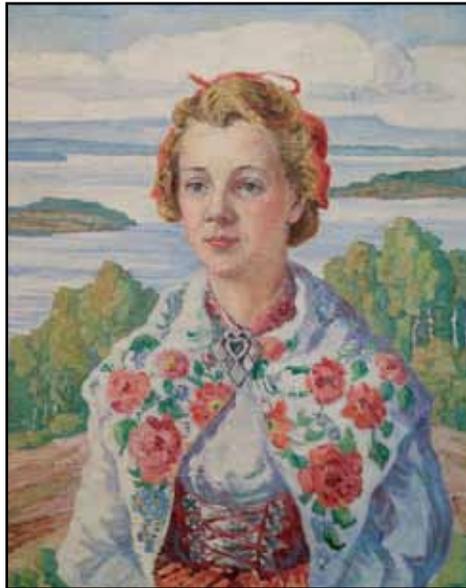


Carl and Olga Milles, 1935, Sandzén Archives, BSMG

Milles wrote about Sandzén for several publications, including an introduction the 1937 exhibition *Birger Sandzén Utställning* held in Stockholm's Gummesons Konsthall. In a 1930 interview, Milles fondly recalled driving

adventures with the Sandzéns and described the appeal of Sandzén's paintings:

*Birger Sandzén's coloring is not like that of anyone else. In order to understand him, one should have seen Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas, and most of all the Grand Canyon and the wild region from which he so gladly chooses his motifs. The coloring which one always meets there is at the outset almost incomprehensible. The earth is so amazingly yellowish-red that it almost seems to be brighter than the sunlight. On automobile journeys in these areas I have had unceasingly to convince myself that it was not an hallucination, when I took the soil in my hands--it gleamed so brightly. I asked Sandzén and others why they did not paint with this soil. The answer was that up to this time every known binder obscured the lustre.*⁶⁰



Girl in Swedish Costume (Signe Larson) by Margaret Sandzén Greenough (1909-1993), 1943, oil on canvas, 30 x 24 in., Greenough Collection, BSMG

Both of the artists Milles sculpted medallions on commission for special occasions such as the *Gustaf Vasa Medallion* (1923) in the Sandzén Gallery collection, commemorating the 400th anniversary of King Gustav I's election to the throne marking the beginning of the modern Sweden away from Danish rule. In this exhibition are both silver and bronze casts of Olga Milles' portrait bust design of her husband. The verso of each medallion is engraved "To Carl from Olga. Midsummer Eve 1955. "Let Me Work While the Day is Burning" words by Ruth Milles" [*Till Carl från Olga Midsmmarafton 1955. "Låt Mig Verka Medan Dagen Brinner" ord av Ruth Milles*]. Olga and her sister-in-law Ruth collaborated on the Midsummer's gift to Carl Milles, happily finished before the artist died that autumn.

Margareta Elisabeth Sandzén Greenough

In November of 1942, Margaret Sandzén (1909-1993) married Charles Pelham Greenough, 3rd (1908-1983) in the Sandzén studio, and then renovated a home on Second Street for a permanent residence in Lindsborg. A painter like her father, Margaret developed a reputation for portrait painting, even earning a commission in 1943 to capture the likeness of the president of Kansas State University, Dr. Francis Farrell, upon his retirement.⁶² Her portrait of Lindsborg artist and contemporary Bethany College

student Signe Larson (1908-1993) outfitted in Swedish garb was completed around the same time.

Margaret Sandzén inherited her father's creative talent, gravitating to drawing and coloring at a very young age. At seven years old, Birger described his daughter to his brother Gustaf as cheerful and lively, observing "Greta thrives best in the studio. When I stretch out the canvas, she stands by me with tacks in an ink bottle," handing them out one by one, and then stands by at the paint box and "picks out tubes of paint she wants me to use."⁶³ In 1924, she exhibited two works in the McPherson High School annual, marking the beginning of her own, professional career. Margaret earned a two-year scholarship

to Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, in 1926 where her father acted as part time chair of the art department, traveling back and forth on the train from Lindsborg. Probably due to the personalized instruction she received at home, Margaret reported to her parents from Stephens that she did "not really like the art teachers so I was not induced to take the courses offered."⁶⁴ Margaret earned both a Bachelor of Liberal Arts and then a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Bethany College, studied painting and etching in Paris, and came home in August of 1933 to teach art at Bethany College. She spent two years in New York City working on a masters degree in art history from Columbia, completing a thesis on the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch (1863-1944). Margaret was devastated when her father passed away but was determined to carry on his work.

Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

Birger Sandzén died on June 22, 1954, but through the efforts of his family his legacy lives on in the Sandzén Memorial Gallery in Lindsborg, Kansas. The Gallery opened doors on October 20, 1957, co-directed by Margaret and Pelham Greenough who curated contemporary exhibition of artists they knew and admired, along with ever-present shows of Birger Sandzén's paintings and prints. Having an art museum in the neighborhood has made a difference to generations of grade schoolers and the community, near and far.

Salina resident Michael Chambers testifies to the

success of Birger Sandzén's vision for the ideal learning environment, recalling his school days in the early 1980s: "Growing up in Lindsborg I had the privilege of being surrounded by great art and amazing artists. We were fortunate to have art education in public school, always! My fourth grade class spent one Friday a month at the Sandzén [Gallery] and every school classroom had original artwork."⁶⁵ School districts all over central Kansas have amassed collections of art that are part of everyday life from kindergartens to universities, just as the Swedish National Romantics would have applauded and Birger Sandzén been satisfied that art continues to be, truly, for all.

- Cori Sherman North, Curator of the
Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery

Endnotes:

- 1 See discussion of this revolutionary history in Michelle Facos, *Nationalism and the Nordic Imagination: Swedish Art of the 1890s* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1998).
- 2 Mary Towley Swanson, "A Tangled Web: Swedish Immigrant Artists' Patronage Systems, 1880-1940," Art History Faculty Publications, Paper 9 (2004): chapter 1, pp. 1-2. online pdf: <https://ir.stthomas.edu/arhistory/pub/9/>
- 3 Birger Sandzén to Oscar Jacobson, 12 Jan 1916; Sandzén Archives, Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, KS (hereafter BSMG).
- 4 Elmer T. Peterson, "Sees Art Center Out West: Birger Sandzen, Who Wants Culture More Than Wealth, Deplores Lack of Temperament in America," *Wichita Eagle* (25 Nov 1916).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, 28 Jan 1891, trans. Birgit Hegewald; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 7 Quoted in Brian B. Magnuson, "Arvid Frederick Nyholm (1866-1927)," for the Illinois Art Project, www.illinoisart.org/arvid-f-nyholm.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 3 Oct 1891; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 10 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 5 Oct 1891; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 11 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 11 Nov 1891; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 12 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 3 Oct 1891; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 13 Birger Sandzén to Gustaf Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 22 Nov 1891; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 14 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 1891; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 15 Sotheby's, *Scandinavian Paintings and Drawings 1880-1930* (London, 25 Mar 1987), 57.
- 16 Birger Sandzén to Karl Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 6 Nov 1893; Sandzén Archives, BSMG
- 17 Rev. C. A. Swensson to Birger Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 6 Nov 1893; Sandzén Archives, BSMG
- 18 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 24 Mar 1894; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 19 Johan Peter Sandzén to Birger Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 12 Aug 1894; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 20 Margaret Sandzén Greenough, "From Sweden to Kansas: The Story of a Living Memorial to Birger Sandzén whose life's work inspired its Creation in 1957," *American Artist* 25, no. 1 (Jan 1961): 26.
- 21 Ibid., 28.
- 22 Leila Mechlin, *American Magazine of Art* (1917), quoted in Naboth Hedin, "Artist on the Prairie," *American Swedish Monthly* (Aug 1957): 12.
- 23 Birger Sandzén to Ernest Pihlblad, 7 Sep 1942; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 24 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 4 Sep 1894; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 25 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 20 Sep 1894; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 26 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Birgit Hegewald, 22 Oct 1894; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 27 Untitled clipping, *Salina Journal* (27 Apr 1915), Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 28 Birger Sandzén to Ernest Pihlblad, 7 Sep 1942; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 29 Birger Sandzén to Johan Peter Sandzén, trans. Emory Lindquist, 21 Sep 1897; Sandzén Archives, BSMG
- 30 Birger Sandzén, "Vår första konstutställning vid Bethany College," *Med Pensel och Penna* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1905), 24. Trans. James Kaplan.
- 31 Ibid., 27.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Birger Sandzén to Ernest Pihlblad, 7 Sep 1942; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 34 For further discussion see Gunlög Fur, *Painting Culture, Painting Nature: Stephen Mopope, Oscar Jacobson, and the Development of Indian Art in Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019).
- 35 Birger Sandzén to Ernest Pihlblad, 7 Sep 1942; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Samuel Holmberg to Oscar Thorsen, 23 Oct 1905; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 39 O B Jacobson and Jeanne D'Ucel, "Samuel Homberg I," section in "Art in Oklahoma," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 32, no. 3 (1954): 266-67.
- 40 Arvid Nyholm, Chicago, to Birger Sandzén, % Asklanda, Elfsborg län, Västergötland, Sweden, trans. James Kaplan 17 Sep 1905; Birger Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 41 Ernst W. Olson, ed., *The Swedish Element in Illinois: Survey of the Past Seven Decades* (Chicago: Swedish-American Biographical Association, 1917), 265.
- 42 Charles S. Peterson to Birger Sandzén, 20 Mar 1912; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 43 Alfrida Leksell Sandzén to Charlotte Leksell, 7 Mar 1912, trans. Birgit Hegewald; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 44 *Lindsborg News Record* 51, no. 23 (22 Mar 1912): 5.
- 45 Olson, ed., *The Swedish Element in Illinois*, 269.
- 46 Charles Hallberg to Birger Sandzén, 23 May 1913; Sandzén Archives, BSMG
- 47 Sandzén Art Registers, 1933, p. 423; Sandzén Archives, BSMG
- 48 Alfred Jansson to Birger Sandzén, 19 March 1912; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 49 Charles Haag to Birger Sandzén, 3 Mar 1925; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 50 Birger Sandzén to Carl Smalley, 16 Sep 1925; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 51 Bethany College yearbook lists Sandzén as president, G.N.Malm as secretary, and various students serving other offices over the years; "Smoky Hill Art Club," *The Daisy* (1915): 77.
- 52 Bror J. O. Nordfeldt to Birger Sandzén, 11 Feb 1913; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 53 "Amerika," *Lindsborg-Posten* (27 May 1908): 3.
- 54 Birger Sandzen, "Svensk-amerikanska konstnärernas utställning i Chicago 1912 [Swedish-American Artists' Exhibition in Chicago 1912]," *Präriëblomma* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1912), 20-38.
- 55 Fiona Donovan, *The Woodblock Prints of B.J.O. Nordfeldt* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991), 53.
- 56 Emily Nordfeldt to Pelham Greenough, 20 April 1976; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 57 Birger Sandzén to Alfrida Sandzén, 11 Aug 1919, Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 58 Barbara Thompson, *In the Middle of America, Printmaking & Print Exhibitions, C.A. Seward and Friends, 1916-1946* (Barbara Thompson Publishing, 2013): 72.
- 59 Sandzén Art Register 1934-1937, 1936 May 9, p.181; Sandzén Archives, BSMG
- 60 Carl Milles interview, *Svenska Dagbladet* (17 Apr 1930).
- 61 Charles Pelham Greenough, 3rd, "Entire Collection of Sandzén Lithographs Shown," *The Bethany College Magazine* (Aug 1981): 3.
- 62 This portrait of Farrell is now in the permanent collection of the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art at Kansas State University.
- 63 Birger Sandzén to Gustaf Sandzén, 1915; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 64 Margaret Sandzén to Birger & Alfrida Sandzén, 27 Jan 1927; Sandzén Archives, BSMG.
- 65 Michael Chambers email to Bill North, 6 Aug 2015.

Exhibition Checklist

Birger Sandzén Memorial Gallery, Lindsborg, KS

1. John A. Altenborg, *Swedish Singing Society Visits Lindsborg*, ca. 1932, painted wood, 11¾ x 12 x 3½ in., base 12 x 3½ x ¾ in., Gift of the John Altenborg Family
2. David Edström, *Ophelia*, ca.1920, marble, 16½ x 13 x 5 in., Greenough Collection
3. Olof Grafström, *Fishermen at the Falls*, 1890, o/c, 25¾ x 31¾ in., Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Bengston
***SCA conservation**
4. Olof Grafström, *A Western Motif (Mt. Thielson, Oregon)*, 1897, o/c, 42 x 66 in. ***SCA conservation**
5. Olof Grafström, *Christ in Gethsemane*, 1921, o/c, 35 x 26 in., Gift of Rev. Hjalmar and Elsie L. Jackson
6. Margaret Sandzén Greenough, *Girl in Swedish Costume (Signe Larson)*, 1943, o/c, 30 x 24 in., Greenough Collection
7. Oscar Gunnarson, *Man Milking a Cow*, ca. 1927, o/c, 17 ½ x 23½ in., Gift in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lindquist by their sons Donald and Roger Lindquist
8. Charles Haag, *Woman with Basket*, ca. 1920, painted earthenware/terracotta; 13 x 5½ x 4 in. Greenough Collection
9. Charles Edward Hallberg, *Untitled*, ca. 1908, o/c, 17¾ x 22½ in., Gift of the Sohlberg, Deere, Fry, Cochran, O'Leary Family Collection
10. Charles Edward Hallberg, *Untitled*, 1909, o/c, 16¾ x 13¾ in., Gift of the Sohlberg, Deere, Fry, Cochran, O'Leary Family Collection
11. Charles Edward Hallberg, *Seascape*, 1910, o/c, 18 x 26 in., Greenough Collection ***SCA conservation**
12. Carl Hallsthammar, *Devotion*, 1926, painted carved pine, 12 x 12 x 7 in. Greenough Collection
13. Bessie Helström, *Untitled (floral still life)*, early 20th c., o/c, 11⅞ x 13¾ in.
14. Samuel Holmberg, *Bluff at Bjorndyke*, 1904, o/c, 12 x 18 in., Oscar Thorsen Collection
15. Oscar Brousse Jacobson, *Portrait of Birger Sandzen*, 1902, o/c, 24 x 18 in., Greenough Collection
***SCA conservation**
16. Oscar Brousse Jacobson, *Children and the Sea*, 1910, o/c, 22⅞ x 16 in., Gift of the Sohlberg, Deere, Fry, Cochran, O'Leary Family Collection
17. Alfred Jansson, *A March Day*, 1915, o/c, 25¾ x 21⅞ in., Bethany College Collection ***SCA conservation**
18. Raymond Jonson, *Pierrot*, 1914, o/c, 44½ x 39 in., Gift of Mrs. C. J. Smalley
19. Carl Lotave, *Untitled (near Lindsborg)*, 1897, o/c, 12¾ x 16 in., Gift of Margaret Eddy, through inheritance from B.G. and Sarah Gröndal
20. G. N. Malm, *Untitled (Swedish coast)*, 1896, o/c, 20 x 37 in., Gift of the family of August Palmquist
***SCA conservation**
21. G. N. Malm, *Wheat Stacks*, 1921, oil on board; 10 x 15 in., Gift of Zona L. Wheeler
22. Carl Milles, *American Bison*, 1903, bronze, 14½ x 15 x 6 in., Greenough Collection
23. Olga Granner Milles, *Carl Milles Medallion*, 1955, silver, 2¼ x 2¼ x ¼ in., Oscar Thorsen Collection
24. Olga Granner Milles, *Carl Milles Medallion*, 1955, bronze, 2¼ x 2¼ x ¼ in., Oscar Thorsen Collection
25. B.J.O. Nordfeldt, *The Skyrocket*, 1906, color woodcut, 8 x 11 in., Greenough Collection
26. B.J.O. Nordfeldt, *Mending the Boat*, ca. 1916, color woodcut, 11 x 12 in., Greenough Collection
27. B.J.O. Nordfeldt, *Buffalo Dance*, ca. 1919, Oil on canvas; 27 x 32 in., Oscar Thorsen Collection
28. Arvid Nyholm, *Harbor Scene*, ca. 1905, o/c, 12 x 18 in., Greenough Collection ***SCA conservation**
29. Arvid Nyholm, *Self-portrait*, 1909, o/c, 20 x 15 in., Greenough Collection ***SCA conservation**
30. Arvid Nyholm, *Bretagne*, 1912, o/c mounted on board, 25½ x 21 in., Bethany College Collection
31. Arvid Nyholm, *The Restorer*, ca. 1927, etching, 8½ x 7 in., Bethany College Collection
32. Birger Sandzén, *Rosa Bragoli*, 1891, o/c, Greenough Collection
33. Birger Sandzén, *Untitled (floral with landscapes)*, 1891, ink on paper, 8 x 5⅞ in. Greenough Collection
34. Birger Sandzén, *Untitled (waterfall scenes)*, ca. 1891, ink on paper, 8 x 5¼ in., Greenough Collection
35. Birger Sandzén, *7-panel screen*, 1892, o/c mounted on board, Greenough Collection
36. Birger Sandzén, *Swedish Farm*, 1899, watercolor, 12 x 15 in., Greenough Collection
37. Birger Sandzén, *Moonlight and Creek*, ca. 1912, o/c, 16 x 24 in., Ellen Strom Collection
38. Birger Sandzén, *Still Life with Peonies*, 1913, o/c, 14 x 20 in., Greenough Collection
39. Birger Sandzén, *Colorado Pines*, 1916, lithograph, 14¾ x 11 in., Greenough Collection
40. Birger Sandzén, *In the Garden of the Gods*, 1918, watercolor, 22 x 28 in., Greenough Collection
41. Birger Sandzén, *Lake in the Rockies*, 1921, woodcut (nailcut), 12 x 10 in., Greenough Collection
42. Birger Sandzén, *Sunset in the Mountains*, ca. 1923, o/c, 18 x 24 in., Gift of Thelma Tichenor

43. Birger Sandzén, *Sunset*, 1921, linocut, 9 x 12 in., Greenough Collection
44. Birger Sandzén, *Windmill in Sweden*, 1926, o/c, 39¼ x 47 in., Greenough Collection
45. Birger Sandzén, *A Kansas Creek*, 1931, lithograph, 7 x 10 in., Greenough Collection
46. Birger Sandzén, *Colorado Stream*, 1952, linocut, 6½ x 4½ in., Greenough Collection
47. Birger Sandzén, *Untitled (Smoky Hill River)*, 1953, o/c, 20 x 24 in., Gift in memory of Dr. Ralph and Marian Hale

Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

1. Oscar Brousse Jacobson, *Winter Forest in Sweden*, ca. 1914, o/c, 18 x 24 in., Gift of Hal Johnson, 1983

Hillstrom Museum of Art, Gustavus Adolphus College, Saint Peter, MN

1. Dewey Albinson, *Landscape*, c. 1920-25, o/c, 22 x 26½ in., Gift of David and Annette Olson
2. Dewey Albinson, *Hell Town (Gray Day)*, 1935, lithograph, 10½ x 14 in., Gift of Louise Borgman Hokenson in honor of Margaret E. Borgman
3. Dewey Albinson, *Hillside Farm*, c. 1930, lithograph, 8¾ x 11½ in., Gift of Gloria C. Kittleson in honor of Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
4. Dewey Albinson, *May Snow*, 1938, o/c, 30 x 34½ in., Gift of Colles and Dr. John Larkin in honor of Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
5. John F. Carlson, *Thawing Snow*, c. 1930-3, o/c mounted on wood panel, 12 x 16 in., Gift of Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
6. Charles E. Hallberg, *Morning on the Open Sea*, undated, o/c, 18¼ x 40¼ in., Hillstrom Museum of Art purchase with funds donated by Dawn and Edward Michael
7. Alfred Jansson, *Autumn Landscape*, 1921, o/c, 11 x 14 in., Hillstrom Museum of Art purchase with funds donated by Dawn and Edward Michael
8. Leon Lundmark, *Beginning of a New Day*, c. 1930, o/c, 48 x 60 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom in memory of Bernhard J. Johnson '39
9. Leon Lundmark, *Lighthouse, Cape Elizabeth, Maine*, c. 1920, o/canvasboard, 8 x 10 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
10. Henry Mattson, *Inlet*, c. 1930, o/c, 32 x 24 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
11. B.J.O. Nordfeldt, *The Tree, Spring (or Grey Tree)*, 1906, color woodcut, 12½ x 9½ in., Hillstrom Museum of Art purchase with funds donated by Dawn and Edward Michael
12. B.J.O. Nordfeldt, *Women on the Shore-Provincetown*, 1916, watercolor and graphite, 11¾ x 14¼ in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
13. B.J.O. Nordfeldt, *Red Earth (Hopkins Farm)*, 1935, o/c, 30 x 40 in., Gift to the College of Emily Abbott Nordfeldt
14. B.J.O. Nordfeldt, *Two Pigeons*, 1952, o/c, 16 x 22 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
15. Carl Sprinchorn, *Beach Scene*, c. 1935-40, watercolor and gouache, 17 x 18½ in., Hillstrom Museum of Art purchase with funds donated by Dawn and Edward Michael
16. Carl Sprinchorn, *Purple Mountains*, c. 1946, o/c mounted on aluminum panel, 16 x 28¼ in., Gift of Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
17. Elof Wedin, *Factory Town*, 1939, o/c, 36¾ x 31 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
18. Elof Wedin, *Boy in Blue Overalls*, c. 1941, o/c, 26¼ x 20 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
19. Elof Wedin, *Etude*, 1952, o/c, 30 x 16 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom
20. Elof Wedin, *Portrait of Lois*, 1959, o/c, 30 x 26 in., Gift of the Reverend Richard L. Hillstrom

McPherson Museum, McPherson, KS

- Anna Larkin, *Untitled (wagon)*, carved wood, 7¼ x 18¼ in.
 Anna Larkin, *Untitled (milking group)*, carved wood, 4 x 8¼ in.

Private Collections

- Olof Grafström, *Untitled*, ca. 1895, pastel & gouache, 15¼ x 11¼ in., Collection of Bill and Carol Gusenius
 Olof Grafström, *Untitled*, 1897, o/c; 30 x 50 in., Collection of Bill and Carol Gusenius
 Olof Grafström, *Untitled*, 1903, o/c, 9½ x 15½ in., Collection of Reverend Richard and Janet Monson
 Emil Janel, *Man Seated*, 1951, painted carved alder wood, 12½ x 6 x 5 in., Collection of John and Margaret Presley
 G. N. Malm, *Swedish Lutheran Church and Parsonage*, 1897, watercolor, 6¾ x 8½ in., Collection of Dallas and Evelyn Nelson



Untitled by Olof Grafström (1855-1933), 1897, oil on canvas, 30 x 50 in., Collection of Bill and Carol Gusenius



Birger Sandzén
- MEMORIAL GALLERY -



Hillstrom Museum of Art

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