

Seeing the World Within: Charles Seliger in the 1940s

October 21, 2012 - January 20, 2013

The Museum of Art is proud to host *Seeing the World Within: Charles Seliger in the 1940s*, on view from October 21 through January 20, 2013. Organized by Jonathan Stuhlman, curator of American Art at The Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C., *Seeing the World Within* is the first exhibition to focus on the pivotal group of pictures the young Seliger created during the first decade of his career.

Charles Seliger (1926-2009) had his first solo exhibition in New York City at Peggy Guggenheims Art of This Century gallery in 1945, when he was just nineteen years old. He was especially influenced by the fantastic imagery, inventive processes, and creative freedom of Surrealism. And his work also is rooted in the principles and ideas explored by his American peers who came to be known as the Abstract Expressionists, many with whom he exhibited during the 1940s. Seliger, however, sought a distinctly personal voice and artistic vocabulary and, typically, made smaller, more intimate pictures than many of his colleagues. He applied both opaque and transparent paints, then scraped away layers to reveal hidden structures and networks that exist beneath the surface of the visible world.

MWP benefactor Edward W. Root was an early collector of Charles Seligers work, acquiring eight small paintings and drawings by him in the late 1940s. These were included in the 2007 50th Anniversary exhibition of Roots bequest, *Auspicious Vision*. Seligers affectionate recollection of Roots personality and conscientiousness as a collector was one of the highlights of the anniversary.

Seeing the World Within is the first Seliger museum exhibition in thirty years. It brings together his best work from the 1940s, borrowed from the artists estate, as well as seventeen private and public collections, including the Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art. In addition to The Mint Museum and MWP, *Seeing the World Within* also was on view at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, Italy. A fully illustrated catalogue, with essays about Seligers artistic development in the 1940s, and the rich artistic milieu that characterized the decade is authored by Jonathan Stuhlman and Michelle Dubois and is available for purchase in the Gift Gallery.

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Charles Seliger (American, 1926-2009),
Organic Form: Air, Sea, Land Enveloped, 1948,
Tempera on Masonite, 9 x 11 7/8 in.
Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Edward Wales Root Bequest, 57.229