

Collection Conversations:

Cedarburg Art Museum forms a Permanent Collection: The Foundation

Cedarburg and surrounding communities have been blessed with the formation of the Cedarburg Art Museum in 2013 and the non-profit organization's subsequent development of ongoing exhibitions, programming, and a permanent collection of artworks. This newly developed newsletter feature, *Collection Conversations*, will be a way to inform the museum's members and friends of the breadth and depth of Cedarburg Art Museum's growing permanent collection of artworks. This edition will focus on how the foundation of a permanent art collection for Cedarburg Art Museum evolved.

In 2007, when the locally owned and highly successful Ozaukee Bank was about to be sold to Harris Bank, the local bank's Board allowed then-Chairman M. D. (Mal) Hepburn to set aside 49 artworks. These artworks were retained to start an art museum as a thank-you for the greater community that had supported the bank. In late 2012, when the Wittenberg-Jochem home was available for sale, the Gift to the Future Fund (a community trust fund formed by the Board of Ozaukee Bank) was utilized to seize the opportunity for purchasing the Cedarburg main street property for an art museum.



In June 2013 the doors of the Wittenberg-Jochem mansion opened as the Cedarburg Art Museum. The inaugural exhibitions in 2013 featured the 49 artworks of the Ozaukee Bank art collection that became the first artworks of the art museum's permanent collection. Prominent Wisconsin artists working in the mid to late 20th Century such as Phil Austin, Gerhard Miller, Max Fernekes, Doris White, Lee Weiss, and Harold E. Hansen were featured. (See Phil Austin's 1993 watercolor painting *Drying the Nets*, in the image above.)

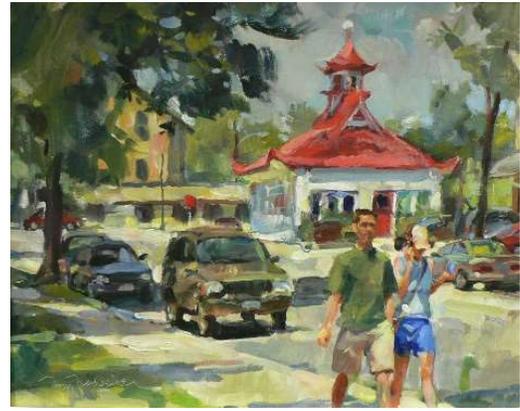
Besides supporting living Wisconsin artists in its selections, the Ozaukee Bank Art Collection also had historic paintings. The most historic and grand painting in the gifted Ozaukee Bank Collection is an oil painting entitled "Milwaukee Exposition Center" by Bernhard Schneider, a German-born landscape artist specialist who came to



Milwaukee in 1885 for the then-popular panorama painting industry. This masterwork of Schneider's will be discussed more thoroughly in a subsequent *Collection Conversations* article devoted entirely to Schneider. Another important collection of eleven paintings that was gifted to the Cedarburg Art Museum from Ozaukee Bank were eleven paintings executed by Edmund G. Schildknecht in Cedarburg in the summer of 1927. The late Carl and Rita Edquist had a special role in bringing these paintings to Cedarburg from Maine in the early 1980s where they were first part of the Carlson Fine Arts Collection that later became part of Ozaukee Bank's Collection. (Edmund Schildknecht's 1927 oil painting of Cedarburg, *The Little Village*, is illustrated at left.)

The Best of Show painting from Cedarburg's annual plein air painting event is another important aspect of the Ozaukee Bank Art Collection that came to the Cedarburg Art Museum permanent collection. The Ozaukee Bank

and its later Gift to the Future Fund has been the major sponsor for Cedarburg's Plein Air Event from its inception in 2001 till the present, with an annual purchase award for the Best of Show painting as determined by three jurors. Therefore, the award-winning plein air paintings are periodically viewable at the Museum and as museum loans to the Cedarburg Public Library. (Tom Nachreiner's oil painting, *Sunday Stroll*, on right, was the Best of Show winner at Cedarburg's 2006 plein air event and is now part of the Cedarburg Art Museum Collection.)



Some six years after Cedarburg Art Museum opened its doors, the permanent collection has grown to more than 250 artworks, thanks to gifts from area art lovers, artists, and collectors who wish to donate their art to an institution that will preserve and display their art. Artworks are admitted to the collection by a review process of the Museum's Collection Committee that follows the museum's mission. The Museum's mission is to exhibit, collect, and preserve the art and artists of Cedarburg and its surrounding areas along with artwork of outstanding artists of Wisconsin. The Museum relies on donations of artwork from friends of the museum and gratefully accepts monetary donations earmarked for conservation to help with preservation and upgrades of museum archival matting, backing, and framing materials. Future editions of *Collection Conversations* will provide information on segmented and growing areas of the Cedarburg Art Museum permanent collection.

-Mary Chemotti
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