

## Collection Conversations:

### Bernhard Schneider exhibition spurs loans and donations to CAM

The earliest and largest painting in the Ozaukee Bank's Art Collection that formed the initial Cedarburg Art Museum Collection is the oil painting *Milwaukee Exposition Center* (c. 1888–1892) by German-born landscape painter Bernhard Schneider. It commands a long-term spot on the museum's second floor above the front staircase of the Wittenberg-Jochem home. In 2014, an ambitious exhibition for the fledgling one-year-old Cedarburg Art Museum was *Bernhard Schneider: From Lens to Brush*. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century discovery of Schneider's late 19<sup>th</sup> Century negative glass



plate photographic images provided the impetus to form an exhibition associating the artist's photographic images with his paintings. The Cedarburg Groth family discovered the photographic negatives in a Cedarburg attic where Schneider once lived. One of the recent photographic prints derived from Schneider's glass plate negative of the Milwaukee Exposition Center was in the museum's *From Lens to Brush* exhibition and was a Groth Family donation to the Museum in 2014.



Schneider's *Milwaukee Exposition Center* painting was the foundation for many other artworks loaned by a variety of Wisconsin families in that exhibition, some of which were also donated to the museum. Two untitled oil paintings by Schneider from his Cedarburg period (1893-1907) were loaned to the 2014 exhibition by Sharon and Tom Krueger of Cedarburg. One Schneider painting has the subject of cows in a creek and another painting, shown at left, depicts a locomotive crossing a Cedarburg dirt road later known as Spring Street. Both paintings subsequently made their way to the Museum, thanks to a gift from the Kruegers for the

cows in the creek landscape and thanks to a partial gift from Kruegers and an anonymous donor for the locomotive landscape painting. Tom Krueger's grandfather Walter Barth had inherited quite a few Schneider paintings from his half-sister Emma Straub Bauer. Emma and husband Carl Bauer had housed Schneider at their Bauer Café and had taken paintings in lieu of rent in many cases. It was in the former Bauer Café building, in fact, where the Groth family discovered the Schneider glass plate negatives in its attic.

Shortly after the 2014 Schneider exhibition closed, the Cedarburg Art Museum received a gift of two Schneider paintings of Cedarburg subjects from the La Crosse, Wisconsin family of James Rix. The paintings had been passed down through Rix's Cedarburg family that had also housed the artist Schneider for a while. Rix's grandmother,

Jennie Barth Armbruster as a young girl, is featured in Rix's donated 1898 Schneider painting (detail of painting is shown at right). Several years later, a Bernhard Schneider landscape painting of the Cedar Creek that had been a part of the original Ozaukee Bank collection was donated to the Museum by the Greg Zimmerscheid and Mary Kay Bourbulais family, adding to the Cedarburg Art Museum's growing collection of Bernhard Schneider paintings. Another Bernhard Schneider painting of a sunset at Hilgen's Spring Park in the 2014 exhibition was also an anonymous gift to the Museum in that year.



In 2018, the Museum was the fortunate recipient of a signed and dated 1896 Bernhard Schneider oil painting of Cedarburg's early wind-powered grist mill on Bridge Road (shown at left). This was a gift from Don Ertl whose



maternal grandfather, Dr. Frederick Weber, had received the painting in barter for services rendered to the artist. The Cedarburg Art Museum Collection now holds eight Bernhard Schneider paintings as of 2020. The Museum is grateful for the generosity of Wisconsin families for donating these and other artworks that have in many cases been passed down through multiple generations of family. While exhibitions often provide the impetus for loans and donations, the Museum also takes its stewardship of artwork seriously as its Collection Committee works on assessing conservation and preservation needs of its collection artworks on an ongoing basis.

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