

ANN KILPATRICK GRADY

ARTIST STATEMENT

Ann (Nancy) Kilpatrick Grady was born on November 12, 1912 to Mary Colman and James Lester Kilpatrick, the fourth of six children, at home in Bala Cynwyd, PA. Nancy lived there as a young girl. When her father was transferred to New Jersey and then New York, she attended, as a boarder, the Oak Knoll, School of the Holy Child in Summit, NJ. Upon graduation, she asked her father to send her to art school. Feeling that art school was too intense for a girl of tender years, he made a bargain with Nancy and told her that, if she attended college for two years and still wanted to go to art school, he would send her. In 1933, she began her life as an artist at Parsons School of Design, The New School in New York City. An interesting note about Parsons during that time is that no student was allowed to touch a paint brush unless they had satisfactorily mastered the art of drawing. Nancy completed her first year in New York and then spent her second year in Paris. During her time in Paris, she competed in a contest where the winner's work would be on the cover of "Le Figaro Illustre". Nancy won the competition. Upon completion of her second year, she was offered a scholarship to continue her studies in Italy. She declined, received her degree, and returned to the US to be married.

Nancy was married on April 30, 1937 to James Joseph Grady. For the next thirty-five years she lived in Philadelphia and managed a large household with five children. It was said that, if she were a man, she would run General Electric. Always keeping art at the forefront, she educated her children about art: short lectures, demonstrations, museum trips, movies, and other excursions. Her legacy is shared by her fifteen grandchildren and thirty great-grandchildren all of whom appreciate art and many of whom have at least one of her paintings. One of her children, Helena Grady, is an artist.

In 1972, after the death of her husband, Nancy returned to her delayed vocation. She studied at PAFA until 1978, when she moved to Cincinnati. There she studied at the University of Cincinnati and had her own studio where she could be found most every day. This was her most prolific period. She traveled widely and, like many artists, always had her art supplies at hand. Many of her paintings reflect time spent in Sea Island, Georgia and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Nancy's drawings and sketches are exquisite. Those years at Parsons paid off. She was partial to still life and the human body. Water color was her medium. She liked the challenge of it; that it was so unforgiving. Many of her most interesting paintings are white on white; a technique she mastered. Most of her paintings are in private collections. Nothing excited her more than live models. All of her art reflects the skills of a master draftsman.

Nancy had shows in Black Mountain, NC, Cincinnati, OH, and other venues. She is listed in the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Her paintings are in private and family collections. From her time at Parsons until her death, at eighty-seven, Nancy was an artist. She told her children that she wished to be remembered first as an artist and then they could say whatever they wished.