

ALEXANDRE

The New York Times

May 24, 1998

Loren MacIver, 90, a Painter Known for Her Eclectic Style

By HOLLAND COTTER

Loren MacIver, a painter of dreamlike, half-abstract landscapes, city views and close-ups of natural forms, and a close friend of many American poets, including Elizabeth Bishop, E. E. Cummings and Marianne Moore, died on May 3 at her home in Greenwich Village in Manhattan, where she had lived and worked since the early 1940's. She was 90.

Apart from taking Saturday classes at the Art Students League in Manhattan in 1919, when she was 10, Ms. MacIver was self-taught, a fact perhaps reflected in her eclectic, highly personal style. She often painted houses or rooms where she lived in New York or Paris, using oil paints with the delicacy of watercolors to create a mood of light-bathed Proustian reverie.

"My wish is to make something permanent out of the transitory," Ms. MacIver wrote in 1946, in a three-paragraph artist's statement, the only one she ever composed. "Certain moments have the gift of revealing the past and foretelling the future. It is these moments that I hope to catch."

In 1929, Ms. MacIver married Lloyd Frankenberg, a poet, and they maintained a close professional relationship all their lives. (Mr. Frankenberg, who died in 1975, wrote a series of poems inspired by Ms. MacIver's paintings.)

Ms. MacIver claimed to have had no professional ambition. "I never thought of painting as a career," she once said. "I cannot tell you how casual it was. I never intended to be a painter. I just like to paint."

It was only in 1935, after her husband, without her knowledge, showed her work to the director of the Museum of Modern Art, Alfred H. Barr, that she began her career. Mr. Barr bought one of her paintings for the museum and another for himself.

While working for three years on the Depression-era Federal Art Project, Ms. MacIver had her first individual show, in 1938 at Marian Willard's East River Gallery, and won praise early on. (Alfred Stieglitz wrote a short catalogue introduction for the show, declaring, "This girl should be given a chance to paint, if anybody should be given a chance to paint.")

Her next New York show was in 1940, at the Pierre Matisse Gallery, which represented her until

291 Grand Street, New York, New York 10002

25 East 73rd Street, 2nd Floor, New York, New York 10021 212.755.2828 alexandregallery.com

ALEXANDRE GALLERY ALEXANDRE FINE ART INC. ESTABLISHED 1996

ALEXANDRE

1990, when it closed. She showed at Terry Dintenfass in 1994, and most recently was represented by the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, which mounted a career survey of her paintings and drawings last winter.

Ms. MacIver had several museum retrospectives: at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1953), the Phillips Collection in Washington (1965), the Montclair Museum of Art in New Jersey (1975) and the Newport Harbor Museum, now the Orange County Museum in California (1983). She was the recipient of numerous grants, including ones from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Rothko Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation.

No immediate family members survive.

Photo: Loren MacIver (Noelle Hoeppe, 1987)

291 Grand Street, New York, New York 10002

25 East 73rd Street, 2nd Floor, New York, New York 10021 212.755.2828 alexandregallery.com

ALEXANDRE GALLERY ALEXANDRE FINE ART INC. ESTABLISHED 1996