

Paul-Henri Bourguignon (1906-1988)

1906: November 18: Paul-Henri Bourguignon born in Brussels, Belgium, son of Flemish mother and Walloon father.

1924: Begins to paint, at first under Armand DePauw, then with A.-T. J. Bastien (1873-1955), well-known, well-traveled Postimpressionist landscape painter, director of Académie de Bruxelles and member of Académie Royale des Beaux Arts. Bourguignon works in pastels, *sur le terrain*, visiting scenic landscapes and cities.

1928: First solo exhibition, at Galerie d'Egmont in Brussels. Show is sold out.

1929–35: Studies art history at Université Libre de Bruxelles, with thesis on El Greco. Travels to Corsica, Spain, North Africa, and Yugoslavia, as well as to Southern France and Italy.

1934: Assistant to Consul General of Haiti.

1935–40: Manager of official tourism office for Belgium and Luxembourg. Travels often to Central and Northern Europe. Few paintings during this period.

1940: Reporter for the Belgian national telegraph agency. After German invasion, he (with all other able-bodied men) is ordered to report to French military forces.

1940–4: Under German Occupation, Bourguignon works in distribution of ration stamps to foreign travelers. Writes texts and translations for three limited-edition books; a play, *En Écoutant Toone Jouer le Bossu*, is published in 1944. Written in Brussels dialect, the text is illustrated by well-known artist Edgard Tytgat. The volume is awarded a prize in book exhibit in New York and performed in Brussels in 1947.

1945–7: Becomes art critic for newspaper *Le Phare* and weekly *Le Phare Dimanche*—a very active period in Belgian art scene. Meets and interviews numerous Belgian and foreign artists, including James Ensor, then living in retirement in Ostend. (Bourguignon's columns of critical writings are later deposited in the archives of the Musée Royale in Brussels.) Establishes own gallery, Le Scorpion, at Knokke-LeZoute.

1947–8: Visits Haiti. With the support of his newspaper, he stays 15 months. Writes travel reportage and, later, fiction. Is much affected by strong visual and human impact of Haiti, which remains in his work for the rest of his life. Helps to promote the new Haitian primitive art movement. In addition to writing, Bourguignon is now active

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movement. In addition to writing, Bourguignon is now active photographer. Meets future wife, Erika, an anthropologist.

1948–50: Visits Peru. Some of his Peruvian adventures are later recounted in fictional form in his novel, *The Greener Grass*.

Bourguignon is active in writing and photography and in collecting folk and pre-Columbian art. No painting during this period.

1950–88: In 1950, Bourguignon settles in Columbus, Ohio, where his wife, Erika, is teaching at the Ohio State University. Here he takes up painting again, no longer working in pastels but, for several years, in gouache and later in acrylics, as well as in charcoal, graphite, and pencil. He draws heavily on the visual images he collected in his travels, including landscapes, figures, and genre scenes, loosely derived, remembered, or imagined.

Bourguignon begins to show his work, first in several one-person exhibitions at the Ohio State University and other venues such as Grinnell College and the Blanden Gallery, both in Iowa, then at the Columbus Museum of Fine Art (now the Columbus Museum of Art) (1964), at Battelle Memorial Institute (1965), and in Edmonton, Canada, at the Jaycox Gallery (1966).

After a period of withdrawal, he begins to exhibit again in 1987 at Gallery 200 in Columbus. He dies in September 1988.

1989+: In addition to a large number of paintings, Bourguignon left a substantial number of graphic works.