



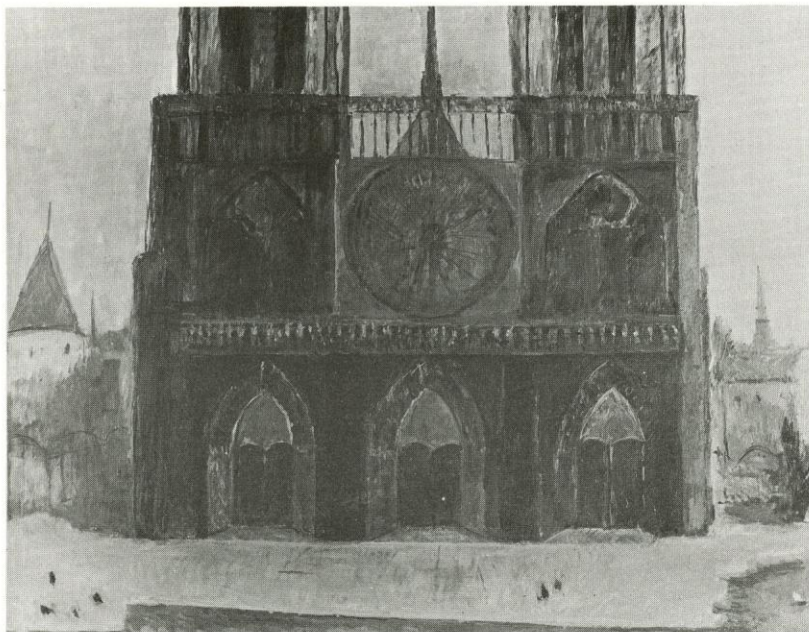
NORA DRAPCE
RECENT PAINTINGS

BULLETIN NUMBER 16: April 1965
The catalog of an exhibition presented at the
ART CENTER: Kalamazoo Institute of Arts
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from April 4, 1965 through May 2, 1965.

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NORA DRAPCE was born in the district of Daugarpils, Latvia. Her early education was provided by tutors. Following this she attended and graduated from a secondary school in Riga. Her art training was obtained in the Riga Municipal Art School which later became the State Academy of Art.

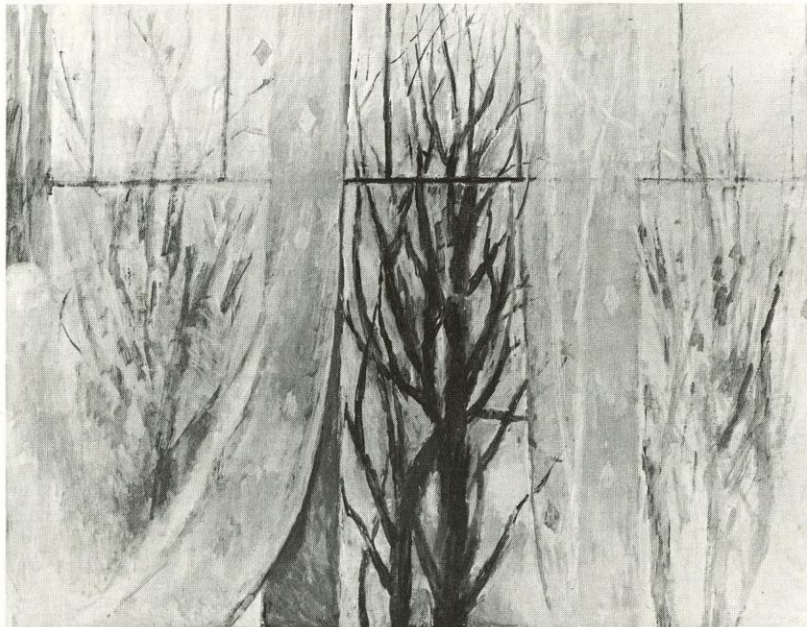
After completing the course of study at the Art School, Miss Drapce received a fellowship from the Culture Fund of the Latvian government which permitted her to travel in Germany and France, continuing her painting, and studying art collections in these countries. During this period her work was shown in exhibitions sponsored by the Culture Fund and one of her paintings was acquired for the collection of the Latvian State Museum.

For the next fifteen years she taught painting on the staff of a college of art in Liepaja, Latvia. During these years she painted and showed her work in exhibitions sponsored by the Latvian government in Latvia and abroad. Two more paintings were purchased by the Latvian State Museum and two paintings by the Riga Municipal Museum. Many others of her works were acquired by private collectors.

In 1944, leaving all her work behind, she went to Germany to spend the next six years of her life in refugee camps along with many of her fellow countrymen. Though she was moved from one camp to another, the greater part of this period was spent in Wurzburg, Germany. Throughout these years she continued to paint constantly. Her work at this time included many portraits.

Her work was shown in many exhibitions of work of refugee artists held after the close of the war. Among these were exhibitions in Frankfort, Augsburg and Wiesbaden in Germany, Amsterdam in Holland and Paris, France. One of her paintings received a first prize in the exhibition at Wiesbaden.

Since Latvia ceased to exist as an independent state after the Communist occupation, arrangements had to be made for Latvian refugees to migrate to other countries. In 1950 Nora Drapce came to live in Kalamazoo. A grant provided by the Swiss government enabled her to bring fifty paintings with her to America.





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In 1950 she showed these paintings at the Art Center in Kalamazoo and joined the staff of this institution as Artist-in-Residence, a post which she has held to the present time. Her paintings have been exhibited in the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Grand Rapids Art Gallery. She has shown her work in a one-man exhibition at the Barzansky Gallery in New York and in one-man shows at the Art Center in Kalamazoo in 1957 and 1962, and at the Maryland Institute in Baltimore in 1964.

In 1964 she was singularly honored by being selected the outstanding Latvian artist-in-exile by the Latvian-American Association from an exhibition of invited works by Latvian artists from eight countries outside the iron curtain.

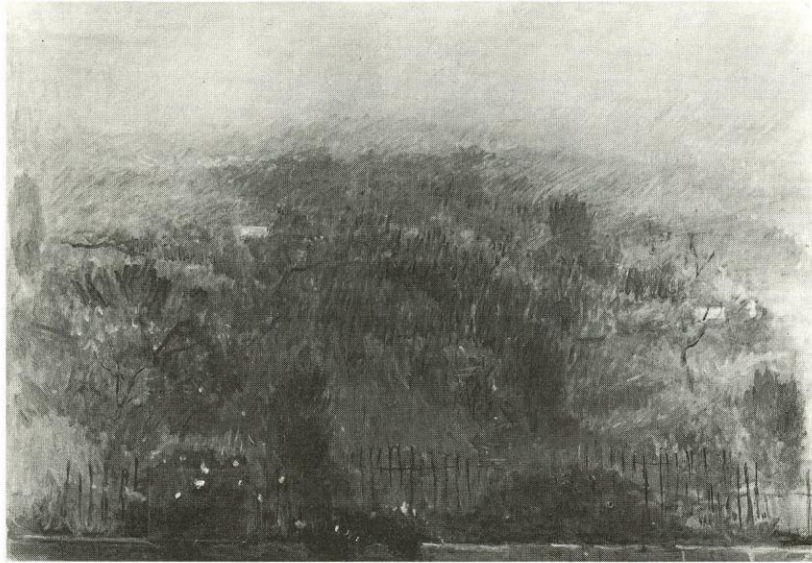
The present exhibition, with one exception, is of work completed since 1962.

As in her previous work, the paintings included in this exhibition are characterized primarily by their painterly quality. These are painters' paintings. They are statements in color and in brushwork. Any attempt to schematize them in a drawing would be meaningless, or nearly so, because they rely so little on draughtsmanlike qualities of organization.

The works have their beginnings in various ways. Sometimes as color notations in very small sketches, sometimes in her mind's eye. Many of her paintings are conceived as series or groups of related works meant to be seen together. The triptych of the waves in this exhibition is an obvious example of this. These paintings began with the idea of a group of five paintings on the theme of the waves. Three were to be the ones included in the exhibition and the remaining two were to be narrow vertical paintings. As work on the group developed, the two vertical panels were gradually dropped from the scheme and were later joined together as one painting, and the original idea was simplified to the form of the triptych with side panels of waves alone and a center panel with a gull and with a stringed musical instrument floating in the water. With time, the musical instrument also was dropped from the scheme leaving only the wave and the gull. The development of this group took place over a two-year period during which each of the paintings underwent a multitude of changes and stages of development.

It is interesting to note that, while the three paintings of the waves are planned to be seen as a group, each is complete in itself. In this they resemble children in a family; children who have common characteristics which make one regard them as a unit and yet, at the same time, see each member as a complete individual in his own right.





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Others of her paintings are related more loosely, centering on a common theme. The theme may be of color -- she refers to many of her paintings as "the white painting" or "the green painting" -- or it may be atmospheric -- several of the paintings in this exhibition deal with the idea of rain.

Some of her ideas for paintings germinate for years before they are set down on canvas. One such painting is "White Painting". About three years before its actual creation on canvas Miss Drapce announced her intention to paint an all-white painting. The result is a painter's tour-de-force. Unlike Malevich's, "White on White", which succeeds as a study in design without painterly qualities to recommend it, Miss Drapce's white painting succeeds purely because of its painterly qualities. It is a virtuoso performance of painting.

Her most unusual quality as a painter, apart from her ability to control color and brushwork so well, is her endless capacity to continue to grow. At a stage in her career when other artists would long since have settled down to refining a theme which they had well under control, Nora Drapce insists on investigating new ideas and forcing new frontiers in painting. As a result, in looking at her paintings, one has the unusual pleasure of enjoying the exuberance and vitality of youthful work coupled with the sure knowledge of his medium that is the mark of the mature artist.

Catalog

OIL PAINTINGS

1. "Amber Wave"
2. "Far Away"
3. "Playing Waves"
4. "Water Melodies"
5. "Green Rain"
6. "Drenched Valley"
7. "Les Jardins sous la Pluie"
8. "Summer Day"
9. "June Blossoms"
10. "Blossoms"
11. "Cathedral"
12. "Canadian Landscape"
13. "Winter Suns"
14. "White Painting"
15. "Brown Painting"
16. "Early Winter"
17. "White Lilac"
18. "Roses" (This painting was completed in 1948)
Loaned by Mr. & Mrs. Donald S. Gilmore.



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WATERCOLOR PAINTINGS

19. "Olympia"
20. "Pika"
21. "Mika"
22. "Green Landscape"
23. "The Buckwheat Field"
24. "Canadian Mountain Town"
25. "Morning"
26. "Bold Landscape"
27. "Yellow Landscape"
28. "Black and White"

INK DRAWING

29. "A Kind of Tree"

