JOHN SLOAN AND STUART DAVIS IN GLOUCESTER: 1915-1918

A thesis submitted to the College of the Arts of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

by

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INTRODUCTION

A bustling economy, an area not yet industrialized, radiating sunlight, and breathtaking views made the city of Gloucester, Massachusetts an attraction for artists during the summer months beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing to the present time with the Rocky Neck Art Colony. Eliot Clark, a twentieth-century painter, states why Gloucester was a site to which many artists were attracted. He said,

Harbours and shipping seem always to have held a vague fascination for the painter who enjoyed the pictorial suggestiveness of houses, wharves, water and their infinite possibilities for artistic arrangement. The hills of East Gloucester, looking down on the harbor, likewise give the painter splendid themes for spotting, spacing and that variety of form which is so necessary to design.¹

John Sloan (1871-1951) and Stuart Davis (1892-1964) are part of a long lineage of artists who painted in Gloucester. They were attracted to the pristine light, geography, and camaraderie of an artists’ community. Gloucester provided Sloan and Davis with a new source of inspiration where they could get away from the bustling city of New York and experiment with new ideas and art practices, which ultimately led to a distinct oeuvre for each artist even though they shared similar influences and acquaintances.

This thesis will focus on John Sloan and Stuart Davis’s development as artists during their formative years in New York and 1915 through 1918 when they summered together at the Red Cottage. It will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters how they shared the same influences such as the teachings and philosophy of Robert Henri, the Ashcan School, and were introduced to Maratta’s color theory by Henri, which led to brightly colored works of art. They both were employed at the monthly political left-wing magazine, The Masses and visited the 1913 Armory Show, the first major exhibition in which Americans were exposed

to some of the finest nineteenth- and twentieth-century works of both European and American art. Sloan and Davis both responded to Matisse, Van Gogh, and Cézanne. Comparisons will be made in this thesis between John Sloan and Stuart Davis’s work from New York and Gloucester as well as the paintings of artists who inspired them.

**Gloucester and Its Appeal**

The landscape of Gloucester appealed to many artists who came to work in front of the picturesque mountains, beaches, coastlines, harbors, and coves as well as a variety of different sizes of ships, houses, and lighthouses. John Wilmerding, the historian of American art, affirms with this statement. In his essay, *Interpretations of Place: Views of Gloucester, Massachusetts, by American Artists*, he states how artists wanted to paint the large rock formations of the coastline, inland elevations on the Cape, and “the tangible qualities of light and air.”

Wilmerding also observes, “the ocean and its weather are powerful and ever-present forces, and the geography of this coast has an attraction for the romantic mind.”

Judith A. Curtis notes how East Gloucester offered a diversity of weather patterns to visiting artists, from peaceful summer days to heavy and powerful storms. The changes in weather conditions and atmospheric shifts provided artists opportunities to paint nature’s different moods and light.

John Sloan, one of the original members of the Realist group known as The Eight, and Stuart Davis, one of the major Modernist painters of the first half of twentieth century, both did striking works in Gloucester. Both artists responded to the light, color, water, and

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3 Ibid.

life they found there. They were part of a long tradition of American artists who recorded the North Shore. Sloan and Davis’s paintings of Gloucester convey the calm, serenity, and friendship they found amidst the beauty of this ocean town. It is their individual bodies of work in Gloucester that are my focus.

Together, Davis and Sloan painted the city life of Manhattan while Gloucester offered them each a source of inspiration of new views. Sloan summered in Gloucester beginning in 1914 until 1918. Davis spent almost every summer there from 1915 through 1934. Sloan’s 1914-1915 work, *Near Sunset, Gloucester* (figure 1) and Davis’s 1915 work, *Gloucester Environs* (figure 2) both present the same area of land with different points of view and light. Sloan’s work shows a concern with color and light as the sun is setting in the distance. His colors are exuberant and provide the viewer with a scene of a surrounding island against mountains. Davis omits the island, changes our viewpoint, and the light depicted in the canvas shows how the sun has already set. The viewer is now positioned to the left but identifying features such as the house with two chimneys, trees, and a large purple mound of foliage are still positioned in the foreground as Sloan had done. Davis paints with large washes of color whereas Sloan paints in the Impressionist style with various colors comprising a single object. Even though Davis and Sloan painted the same view and have similar influences, their styles are distinctive to each artist and this will be extensively discussed in the coming chapters.

**Original Research**

This thesis demonstrates original research from a travel and research grant awarded by Kent State University in the fall of 2012. I was able to travel to the Delaware Art Museum where I gathered materials at the Helen Farr Sloan Library and Archives in
Wilmington, Delaware. I examined John Sloan’s use of Maratta’s color system (to be discussed) in his 1917 painting, *Hill, Main Street, Gloucester* (figure 43) by observing a diagram Sloan made using Maratta’s color system. He placed the same values of colors from the diagram into his painting. Primary sources were researched in regard to Maratta’s color theory, which included a pamphlet written by Hardesty G. Maratta along with swatches of Sloan’s gray and color scale and notes written by his second wife, Helen Farr. My findings are discussed in Chapter II.

A second research grant was awarded, which allowed me to visit Gloucester, Massachusetts. I witnessed the same sites Sloan and Davis viewed in the early twentieth century when they summered there. At the Cape Ann Museum, I examined photographs from their Herman W. Spooner Collection and examined books published the same year Sloan and Davis visited Gloucester. Never before had a scholar written about photographs from the museum’s collection and compared them to paintings made by Sloan. It will be discussed in Chapter IV, how I studied a photograph of Thatcher’s Island Lights and compared the spatial distance between objects to Sloan’s 1915 painting, *Twin Lights—Purple Rocks* (figure 122).

One of the reasons why Sloan came to Gloucester was to paint its scenery and experiment with new art practices, which emerged from the Armory Show. I extensively look at paintings Sloan made in Gloucester such as his 1914 works, *Sunflowers, Rocky Neck* (figure 113) and *Balancing Rock, Gloucester Harbor* (figure 115). Never before has a scholar compared these two works together and discussed how Sloan changed properties of Gloucester to meet his artistic needs. In these two works, which will be discussed in Chapter
IV, Sloan changed the sizes and shapes of the houses in front of the body of water and enlarged the steeple and tower.

Gloucester is visually compelling and offers a variety of subject matter for artists to paint from its beaches, harbors, and coves to its residents, architecture, and industrial machinery. Photographs taken by myself and other tourists depict the many moods of Gloucester. Depending on the weather conditions, the light can be bright and pristine or dark and dismal. Both Sloan and Davis portrayed this seaside city as quaint, beautiful, serene but also bustling, unglamorous, and sometimes unrealistic.

Art historians have not extensively discussed Sloan and Davis in Gloucester together at the Red Cottage as this thesis has done. I examined here each of their oeuvres from Gloucester and compare works of art, which depicted the same subject matter but were in different styles. John Sloan never diverted from a Realist style while Davis inspired by Picasso strived to create his own authentic American Cubism. It will be examined in Chapter V how Davis began to flatten objects and portray multiple vignettes, a Cubist approach never undertaken by Sloan. No other scholar has written comprehensively about the similarities Sloan and Davis were both exposed to before they set out to experiment in Gloucester. This thesis demonstrates how they shared these influences and portrayed Gloucester, this seaside town in styles that are unique to each of them.
CHAPTER I

A BRIEF HISTORY OF GLOUCESTER

Gloucester is located on Cape Ann on the North Shore, a coastal region between Boston and New Hampshire, in Massachusetts (figures 3-5, maps of Gloucester and Rocky Neck). The foundation of the town is made of granite, and Gloucester is the oldest fishing port in America. Gloucester was first founded in 1606 by the French explorer, Samuel de Champlain who called the area “le beau port.”5 Two hundred Native Americans already lived in this area when he discovered the town.6 In 1614 Captain John Smith “named the area around Gloucester, Cape Tragabigzanda after a Turkish princess” but this name did not stick around long because King Charles I renamed the area, Cape Ann in honor of his mother.7

By 1650, there were a total of eighty-two people living in Gloucester and it steadily grew throughout the years, as by 1700 there were seven hundred occupants.8 They farmed, fished, and built ships, which were used for trade in order to survive.9 Until the 1860’s, Gloucester was involved with trade with the East and West Indies, South America, Europe, and Dutch Guinea until the trade center was transferred to Boston.10 This did not have an effect on the population growth as granite quarries and fishing businesses attracted natives and citizens from abroad to settle in Gloucester.11

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6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 The Fisheries of Gloucester from the First Catch by the English in 1623, to the Centennial Year, 1876, (Gloucester: Procter Brothers, 1876), 8, 10.
9 Ibid., 16.
10 Ibid., 74.
11 Ibid., 78.
Gloucester has continued to be a summer attraction because of its topography as tourists are charmed by the rural nature of the land and also the sea. They could go sailing and visit numerous cities such as Salem, Manchester, Lowell Island, Marblehead, Thacher’s Island and many more. Recent tourist photographs display the many moods of Gloucester; the serene and quaint harbor in Rocky Neck, an island connected to Gloucester by a causeway, has a variety of boats in different sizes and colors (figures 6 and 7) and a dark and dismal day as seen in the green waters that were once sparkling blue (figures 8 and 9). Today, Gloucester remains a tourist site with its whale watching, art museums, shopping, and spas. Its breathtaking views remain pristine in spite of these man-made developments.

**Gloucester During the Time of Sloan and Davis**

Business and tourism were flourishing, as was the manufacturing industry during the early twentieth century in Gloucester. A variety of shops, companies, manufactured goods, summer activities, climate, and the beautiful coastal scenery made this city an ideal destination for travel. Published in 1916, *The City of Gloucester, Massachusetts: Its Interests and Industries* convey these attributes while providing important historical information about the city. Gloucester’s government consisted of a mayor (in 1916 it was Charles H. Barrett) and four commissioners. The government encouraged economic growth while maintaining a safe environment for citizens to live in. A police and fire department protected 140 miles of streets.

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12 Ibid., 80.
13 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 4,7.
The Boston & Maine Railroad and the Boston & Gloucester Steamship Company allowed the city to manufacture products with easily obtained raw materials. By importing resources and using Gloucester’s own natural resources, industries ranged from making glue, refrigerators, and anchors to dresses, pants, tents, and upholstery. Banks (Cape Ann National Bank and Gloucester Safe Deposit & Trust Co.), churches (St. Anne’s Catholic Church), grocery (The Green Market), ice cream (Marshall & Marchant), shoe (The House of Kay), furniture (Drake & Hersey Co.) and department stores (Butman & French and W.G Brown & Co.) provided citizens with daily life needs and services.

Other industries supplied Gloucester with manufacturing goods. Gloucester Coal Company (est. 1860) provided coal to families, manufacturing plants, and consumers. L.B. Nauss & Sons (est. 1866) were dealers in lumber, brick, lime, and cement and made products such as doors, blinds, and moldings. A.P. Stoddart (est. 1876) supplied shafting, hangers, pulleys, and pipe. Additional businesses utilized Gloucester’s fishing industry. The Russia Cement Company manufactured liquid glue from fish skins. Established in 1914, the Cape Ann Cold Storage Company provided storage for fish. By 1916, there were 154 vessels weighing over twenty tons and 111 vessels weighing five to ten tons fishing in Gloucester’s waters. Some of the fish they caught in 1915 were salt and fresh cod, halibut, haddock, fresh herring, fresh blue back, and fresh and salt mackerel. All of the businesses mentioned were advertised and discussed in The City of Gloucester, Massachusetts: Its Interests and Industries, a pamphlet produced by the Gloucester Board of Trade to inform readers of the many services and products of Gloucester. Gloucester’s economy is unique to its location and allowed the city to flourish.

\[16\] Ibid., 8.
Predecessors of John Sloan and Stuart Davis in Gloucester: Fitz Hugh Lane

One of the first artists to paint Gloucester was the native-born painter, Fitz Hugh Lane (1804-1865). He began to sketch the scenery around his home because he was not able to partake in normal childhood activities.\textsuperscript{17} This did not hinder his art as he produced luminous paintings of Gloucester. He worked laborious drawings into paintings creating light-filled canvases of Gloucester’s coast with its fully rigged ships. Art critic Clarence Cook explains the realism of his early paintings by stating how his pictures showed “perfect truth.”\textsuperscript{18} His father was a sail maker and Lane knew “the construction, the anatomy, the expression—and to a seaman every thing that sails has expression and individuality—Lane knows how she will stand under this rig, before this wind, how she looks in all changes and guises.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Gloucester Harbor at Sunset} from 1858 (figure 10) displays Lane’s knowledge of ships but also shows an interest in measured light and atmosphere, two important qualities which made him a Luminist painter.\textsuperscript{20} Numerous ships are in the harbor and a lighthouse as well as a house are depicted in the background. The composition is clearly divided into parts and the viewer does not feel overwhelmed as Lane positioned ships in the middle ground away from the spectator. Sunlight reflected in the water creates various values and shades of orange, yellow, green, purple, and blue. These different hues are mirrored in the sky, which


\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 48-49. “She” in this sentence refers to a boat.

\textsuperscript{20} Artists belonging to the Luminism tradition include: Fitz Hugh Lane, Martin Johnson Heade, John F. Kensett, William Sidney Mount, and George Caleb Bingham. Luminist artists had clearly organized compositions with marine or harbor views with an emphasis on light. There is an absence in brushstrokes, their compositions depict a stillness of time, and show tangible light instead of transcendental. See, \textit{American Light: The Luminist Movement, 1850-1875, Paintings, Drawings, Photographs} for further information on Luminism.
creates a mood of serenity and tranquility. To reiterate this feeling, Lane depicted men on the ships enjoying the view rather than working. Wilmerding states how Lane often chose sunrises and sunsets because it challenged him to paint the color scheme the sun depicted and it displayed romantic tendencies.\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Gloucester Harbor at Sunset} is a prime example of a Luminist work as it depicts the calm atmosphere of Gloucester where many painters went to escape city life.

\textbf{Winslow Homer}

One of the most revered artists of the nineteenth century, Winslow Homer (1836-1910), belongs to the lineage of Gloucester painters. Homer visited Gloucester twice to paint the scenery and portrayed a different representation of a sunset in his 1880 work titled, \textit{Sunset at Gloucester} (figure 11). Compared to Lane’s work, \textit{Gloucester Harbor at Sunset}, Homer’s work is less crowded and the ships look as if they are moving across the body of water. Lane’s ships are at a halt and his scene looks precise and orderly because of his careful color arrangement. Homer’s scene, by contrast, is less detailed; he does not portray the entire spectrum of the sunset but rather an overcast sky. He is a bolder painter and intentionally left unpainted areas of paper in this watercolor.

Watercolor plays an important role in how we view both this painting and of Gloucester. Until 1860, women and amateur painters practiced watercolor, not highly established painters.\textsuperscript{22} Martha Tedeschi credits Homer with professionalizing the medium, which is made of “finely ground pigment or dye and a solution of gum arabic, which can be


diluted into washes of increasing transparency by adding water.”

The American Watercolor Society was founded in New York on December 5, 1866 and their goal was to promote the medium and hold exhibitions. Both women and men were allowed to join this society. Exhibitions and membership continue today with artists from all over the world.

Most of Homer’s Gloucester paintings were done in watercolor; James F. O’Gorman suggests this allowed Homer to depict realism and intimacy in his work. Tedeschi proposes Homer used watercolors instead of oils because it allowed him to “learn through experimentation—with color theory, composition, materials, optics, style, subject matter, and technique.” Tedeschi also notes how watercolors allowed Homer to have “artistic freedom—to paint outdoors when he chose, to work quickly, and to ponder nature as both brilliant and dangerous.”

Painting outdoors will be seen in future generations of artists who visited Gloucester.

A second sunset by Homer titled, *Gloucester Sunset* (figure 12) embodies Impressionist qualities as he mixed various colors and sizes of brushstrokes in capturing the portrayal of water. A different quality of light is depicted as compared to Homer’s *Sunset at Gloucester* (figure 11). *Sunset at Gloucester* portrays the movement of the sun setting and *Gloucester Sunset* reveals how the sun has almost set and will be gone until the next morning. Homer’s depictions of these sunsets capture a fleeting moment which will never

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23 Ibid., 21-22.
27 Ibid., 20.
happen again. These painterly snapshots were done with immediacy and the viewer feels as if this glimpse of Gloucester is a personal experience. In these Homer works, Gloucester is a peaceful city and harbor. Each artist in this tradition of portraying Gloucester records one of its many moods.

Homer knew about Gloucester from Fitz Hugh Lane’s work since Homer and Lane both trained in Boston. Homer lived in Prout’s Neck, Maine but summered on Ten Pound Island in Gloucester in 1873 and 1880. He was known as one of the “summer people” who took the recently built Eastern Railroad to Gloucester. D. Scott Atkinson, a curator, suggests Homer came to Gloucester to paint the scenery and light but also the boys of Gloucester. During the late 1860’s, Homer painted children in order to “explore the theme of boyhood” and bring back memories which may have been forgotten. Homer depicted boys sailing, in the shipyards, picking berries, playing, and sitting in trees.

Another painting of Gloucester by Homer is meant to serve as a warning to children and adults. *How Many Eggs?* (figure 13) from 1873, depicts two boys taking eggs from a bird’s nest. Jochen Wierich calls this activity a “childish adventure” as the boys might be antagonized by the flight of birds above them. Even though these boys are being mischievous, it is an important warning for visitors not to harm the land or animals in Gloucester. Gloucester was and continues to be today, a peaceful site, a place to escape the

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29 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
big city, and its inherent problems. Visiting or living in a beautiful, untainted city along the coast allows people to appreciate their surroundings and a quieter, less rushed life. Homer’s images of children in Gloucester convey a forgotten innocence and bring back childhood memories. Both Homer and Sloan portrayed children in Gloucester but Sloan’s paintings, as we will later see, do not have symbolism attached. They instead display children integrated into the land and lifestyle of Gloucester and were used by Sloan to practice new painting methods.

**Childe Hassam**

One of the main reasons artists came to Gloucester was to paint the light. Childe Hassam (1859-1935), known as the “American Monet,” painted Gloucester in the Impressionist style.\(^\text{34}\) He went to Gloucester because he was warned not to vacation at the Isles of Shoals located off the coast of Maine because of the Spanish-American War.\(^\text{35}\) Susan G. Larkin also explains how Hassam made trips to Gloucester in order to paint the scenery; it was easily reached, and he went to visit his friends such as the painter Willard Metcalf.\(^\text{36}\)

A work of art from 1899, *Gloucester Harbor* (figure 14), illustrates the appeal the area had on Hassam. “The colonial architecture, a picturesque setting, and a bustling harbor” are some of the reasons why Hassam liked to paint here.\(^\text{37}\) The canvas is set up in horizontal bands, which allows the viewer to have a clear view of the city. Larkin states how the viewer is able to see the fish canneries on Rocky Neck, the chimney of the Marine Railways power

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\(^{35}\) Ibid., 51.


\(^{37}\) Ibid., 163.
plant, and ships carrying trade.\textsuperscript{38} All of the details Hassam included in this painting describe the various functions of Gloucester and show visual diversity.

Hassam painted this same view a second time in a work also titled \emph{Gloucester Harbor} (figure 15). The viewer can see some differences between the two paintings; for example, in the second \emph{Gloucester Harbor} (figure 15) Hassam omitted the yellow house on the right and our viewpoint is changed. We now have a central and closer view of the house and the city does not seem as active as before. What has not changed is the style in which Hassam paints. H. Barbara Weinberg states how Hassam never abandoned his Impressionistic tendencies in painting.\textsuperscript{39} He experimented between using thick and thin brushstrokes and used vibrant and bold colors.\textsuperscript{40} Both Gloucester paintings were done with thin brushstrokes and a similar color palette.

\textbf{Maurice Brazil Prendergast}

Maurice Brazil Prendergast (1859-1924) shared the same love of color and Gloucester with the other artists discussed. Prendergast, often considered an American Post-Impressionist, lived in Boston and Winchester and traveled to Gloucester to paint its scenery. His 1912 work titled, \emph{Gloucester Harbor} (figure 16) depicts multiple women in front of a house with a man on a horse overlooking the harbor. The viewer does not know the identity of the figures or the reason for their presence. Prendergast filled the scene with ships, foliage, and islands in the background. He divided the canvas into parts as the eye recedes into the background, trying to grasp all elements that are painted.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 167.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
The busy nature of the scene is enhanced by his thick brushstrokes. Prendergast built up the canvas by overlapping colors. The use and application of the colors looks like a tapestry. Wilmerding suggests Prendergast used color to give the viewer a mood instead of painting the physical reality of the landscape.\textsuperscript{41} Gloucester is portrayed by Prendergast as a bustling and diverse city, contrary to Lane, Homer, and Hassam who depicted a quaint and quiet city. These contrasting views heighten the different aspects of Gloucester and its appeal. Gloucester can be serene but also lively, and it is this dynamic with its ever-changing appearance that is an attraction for artists.

\textit{Golf Course, East Gloucester} (figure 17) displays a joyous event of women relaxing outdoors and an “actual sensation of holidays and festivals.”\textsuperscript{42} Thin washes of watercolor allow the viewer to look deeper into the work and since there is limited detail, one can focus on the use of color and how it affects the mood of the painting. The women appear festive as a servant waits on them. They are surrounded by beautiful scenery with sailboats in the harbor, trees, and a vase with striking red flowers set up on a table. This painting could appear as an advertisement of how visitors can enjoy their time in Gloucester. In John Sloan’s portrayals of Gloucester, he would similarly provide scenes of tourists playing croquet and walking along the beach.

The portrayals of Gloucester seen in these four artists vary. Lane and Homer provided realism in their paintings of Gloucester. Hassam and Prendergast painted in an Impressionist style. These styles were formed primarily in Western Europe and brought into Gloucester. Carter Ratcliff, an art critic, states how “Gloucester encouraged stylistic

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 28.
independence but never inspired a style of its own.\textsuperscript{43} The artwork Davis and Sloan produced in Gloucester was not original in the sense of a new movement but the city had a profound effect on their art in terms of subject matter and allowed for experimentation. Gloucester offered them different scenery and mood compared to the bustling city of New York, where Sloan and Davis lived. They were able to experience a different locale and lifestyle on the East coast. Sloan and Davis left striking works of art from Gloucester and, even though they shared similar influences, the outcome of their work was entirely different.

Conclusion

When I traveled to Gloucester in November of 2012, the city and its appeal had not changed from the time of Davis and Sloan. Even though the city was not in its peak of summer tourism, there was a lot of bustle. Cars and buses zoomed around the streets non-stop while numerous people sat on benches around the harbor soaking in the view. Main Street, a road lined with commercial and unique stores, curved up and down Gloucester. There were a variety of stores, which ranged from art galleries, furniture and yarn shops, ice cream parlors, restaurants, and pubs. All food, clothing, and household goods, which a person needs to survive, can be found on Main Street. The harbor was charming with a variety of ships deserted at docks and there were no schooners to be seen. Even though the sky was mostly overcast on the day I visited, when the sun peeked through, the water glimmered and shined. Gloucester is a unique city and has been documented as so by artists who came there to paint its scenery and light. Today, Gloucester continues to be a thriving art community and Sloan and Davis comprise a part of the long lineage of artists who have painted there.

\textsuperscript{43} Carter Ratcliff, \textit{The Gloucester Years} (New York: Grace Borgenicht Gallery, 1883), 3.
Both Sloan and Davis studied under Robert Henri (1865-1929); his philosophy and teachings guided their developments as artists. Sloan and Davis were members of the Ashcan School, a term coined by two authors, Holger Cahill and Alfred Barr in the 1930’s to describe this group of Urban Realist painters.\textsuperscript{44} The Ashcan School, one of the earliest twentieth-century developments in the history of American art, focused on chronicling scenes of daily urban life in a variety of settings, from saloons, streets, parks, and rooftops to theaters, cafés, and sports events. These city painters characteristically used dark palettes and thick brushstrokes. It is the individual developments of Sloan and Davis during their years under Henri’s influence that is of interest, as both painted genre scenes and landscapes.

A social gathering brought Henri and Sloan together, which altered the latter’s life and art as they developed a long-lasting friendship. Henri taught at William Merritt Chase’s New York School of Art from 1902 until 1908 and later opened his own school in 1909 called the Robert Henri School of Art. Stuart Davis attended this school after only being in high school for one year. The school was revolutionary in its methods, which focused on student’s individuality and making sketches of everyday life. Along with Davis, there were other painters such as George Bellows, Edward Hopper, Rockwell Kent, and Glenn Coleman who attended Henri’s school.\textsuperscript{45} Henri’s teachings had an ongoing impact on the artwork of

\textsuperscript{44} Elizabeth Milroy, \textit{Painters of a New Century: The Eight and American Art} (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Art Museum, 1991), 15.

\textsuperscript{45} Bennard B. Perlman, \textit{The Immortal Eight: American Painting from Eakins to the Armory Show, 1870-1913} (Westport: North Light Publishers, 1979), 190.
Sloan and Davis. He guided them not in terms of style, but in subject matter. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Henri’s teachings are fundamental to the understanding of their art and the importance of the Ashcan School. I will also discuss critical factors in the development of Sloan and Davis’s art. These include avant-garde European influences, *The Masses*, and Maratta’s color theory (to be discussed).

Robert Henri’s book, *The Art Spirit* (1923) contains notes, letters, and documents to his students, which embodied his philosophy, inspiration, and techniques regarding his methods for the creation of works of art. His ideas, though seemingly simplistic, are significant in the history of early twentieth-century American art. Some of his important statements are: “the goal is not making art. It is living a life. Art is a result. It is the trace of those who have led their lives.”

This philosophy would be the foundation of the Ashcan School to which Sloan and Davis belonged. This group of Realists captured signs, attitudes, and activities of their surroundings. They portrayed ordinary scenes of daily life instead of religious, mythological, literary, or historical events, which were characteristically painted in an Academic manner.

The developments of Sloan and Davis as painters are complex. We will first start with the older painter, John Sloan and his absorption of Henri’s thoughts and European tastes. Then we will look at the development of Davis and the ideas and artists that molded his work.

**Robert Henri and John Sloan**

Sloan first met Henri in Philadelphia in 1901, at a party hosted by Charles Grafly, who was a teacher and an old classmate of Henri’s. Both Sloan and Henri shared a mutual interest in books, art, and Walt Whitman, and this created a bond between the two. In order

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to support his family, Sloan worked as an illustrator for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Press.* Since Sloan worked during the day, he could only attend night classes at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, where he studied under Henri’s teacher, Thomas Anshutz. Bennard B. Perlman, one of the renowned historians of this period, states how Sloan, dissatisfied with the education he was receiving, as he already knew how to draw from the antique, quit school and created an organization known as the Charcoal Club (figure 18). Henri, who studied at the l’Académie Julian in Paris, offered advice to the Charcoal Club at his studio. The quantity of artists varied, but Sloan, William Glackens, James Preston, Edward Davis (Stuart Davis’s father), and Frederic Rodrigo Gruger attended regularly. Henri’s instruction was instrumental to Sloan becoming a painter as later he was quoted saying, “Henri could make anyone want to be an artist… I don’t think I would have been a painter if I had not come under his direction.”

Sloan and his wife, Dolly moved to New York in April, 1904 to join Robert Henri, Everett Shinn, George Luks, and William Glackens after he lost his job with the *Philadelphia Press.* Shinn, Luks, and Glackens studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, worked as newspaper illustrators, and to be discussed, belonged to The Eight, and the Ashcan School. Their art recorded daytime and night scenes of the city and was inspired by Robert Henri’s fluid brushstrokes and saturated palette. Shinn’s association with The Eight was temporary as his interest in theater drew him to paint theatrical scenes and later became a set

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49 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 44.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 47.
54 Ibid., 86.
designer and art director. Craven states Luks’s grim city scenes featured “dark tones and flowing, almost brutal brushwork, which suited the street-life subjects he chose to depict.” Glackens, who had numerous inspirations including the Impressionists, depicted pleasant scenes showing the vitality of life. In 1906, a trip to Spain and France influenced a brighter color palette, and when he returned to the United States he painted beach scenes of Long Island. Glackens was the Chairman of the Domestic Selection Committee for the 1913 Armory Show and became a founding member and was the first president of the Society of Independent Artists in 1916.

The grit, excitement, and activities of daily life of the typically lower-class New Yorkers became the subject matter of these painters as well as Sloan’s. Sloan’s genre scenes show his immersion in the momentum of the city with its bustling pace and diversity. Under Henri’s guidance, he became the artist today which he is known for, the painter of city life. In Sloan’s book, *Gist of Art* (1939), he states how before he met Henri his palette was dark and his subjects were literary and poetic. All this changed after working with Henri, who believed artists should not follow any one school but create their own unique stance as artists by choosing subject matter that was interesting and relevant to their own time. Henri states “the canvas will carry into future time the feel and the way of life as it happened and as it was seen and understood by the artist.”

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57 Ibid., 429-430.
59 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 217.
Sloan’s paintings indicate his interest and keen observation of the bustling life of the city. *A Woman’s Work* (figure 19, 1912), now in Cleveland, is an example of a New York genre scene that embodies Henri’s teachings. In this painting, a woman is hanging laundry outside. She is modestly dressed in a blue garment and has a basket of clothes next to her. Texture is shown in the brick, which contrasts the smooth surface of the metal ladders. The color palette of this work is muted but there is a play between light and shadow. Sloan believed light can be used to emphasize the design of the composition and bring other forms and ideas “into greater realization” as with the shadows cast from the clothes, which is a central part of the composition.  

*A Woman’s Work* and other works to be discussed in this chapter are presented to indicate Sloan’s early roots as an artist of genre scenes, prior to European Modernist influences, which changed his color and light dramatically.  

*A Woman’s Work* is a direct result of observation as Sloan painted this work from his apartment. Sloan called himself an “incorrigible window watcher.” Henry Adams, a curator and professor of American art, states New York was packed with people, which led to close accommodations. This painting illustrates how easy it was to peer into a stranger’s life and catch them performing an activity without their knowledge. Adams writes how shocking *A Woman’s Work* was in the early twentieth century, as most paintings during this time were of wealthy, fashionable women. Sloan gives us a different perspective and

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66 An example of a portrait of a young wealthy fashionable woman can be seen in John Singer Sargent’s *Portrait of Lisa Colt Curtis* (figure 20, 1898). Lisa Colt was heir to the Colt firearms and is seen looking past the viewer wearing a satin dress, standing on an expensive rug with her hands resting on the table behind her.
otherwise not glamorous vision of how the unprivileged, in particular, the lower class, lived. From the laundry, the viewer can observe how the woman has a large family and is part of the working class. Adams affirms how there are no fancy dresses but instead clothes of all different sizes, male and female. Paying close attention to these details, the viewer begins to imagine and understand the obstacles this woman faces as she takes care of her family.

**Sloan, Henri, and the National Academy of Design**

Sloan was able to obtain freelance jobs in New York, which allowed him to produce a large amount of artwork. Robert Henri’s circle of friends accumulated paintings they could not sell or exhibit including Sloan’s; who by the time he was thirty-five did not sell even one painting. During this period in New York, the National Academy of Design regulated paintings to be sold and exhibited, was made up of exclusive members, was a private institution, and implemented a jury system. Sloan states how “voting in matters of taste can never result in the selection of the best work.” Henri agreed and states how

> “The demand to pass juries, to make the acceptable, the salable, fighting off the wolf from the door, obtaining medals for the weight they have in waging the social war; all these things, certain and terrible in their exactions, have held the slave with his eye on the by-product, and the by-product has suffered, for the by-product cannot produce itself.”

Henri tried to alter the Academy and the jury system. The Academy would not exhibit progressive works, only conservative ones by their members, because, as Perlman states they

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68 Ibid.
72 Ibid., 30.
were afraid of competition and change. Henri thought the Academy would grant deserving artists a chance to exhibit their works when the Society of American Artists merged with the Academy in 1906, but was mistaken. The Society of American Artists was created in 1877 in response to the conventionalism of the National Academy of Design. They believed American artists who did not train in Europe were worthy of having their art shown and painters should have artistic freedom in terms of color, varnish, and subject matter.

Robert Henri was part of a jury to judge 1,500 paintings for the Academy’s annual spring exhibition in 1907. He observed the jury making inconceivable decisions about prospective artists. Many of the artists would soon form their own group as a result of this conservative attitude. George Luks submitted his now lost painting titled, *Man With Dyed Mustachios* to the Academy and was rejected. This action led to secession by The Eight. In defiance of the stranglehold the Academy had on an artist’s ability to have artistic freedom, Henri removed his own entries. Henri states, “It’s hard to foretell just what will be the result of the Academy’s rejection of painters. What the outsiders ought to do is to hold small or large group exhibitions so that the people may know what the artists who have something important to say are doing.”

The formation of The Eight provided independent artistic recognition from the rigid inflexible standards adhered to by the National Academy of Design. Henri fulfilled this need when the group known as The Eight which included: Arthur

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76 Ibid., 275-276.
78 Ibid., 149.
B. Davies, William Glackens, Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, George Luks, Maurice Prendergast, Everett Shinn, and John Sloan exhibited their work at Maebeth Gallery in February of 1908. The following year in February, 1908, Luks’s banned painting was among those exhibited.

**The Eight**

This key exhibition in the history of American art allowed The Eight to have independence over their paintings as never before and it was the first and only exhibition where these eight artists solely exhibited with each other. The Eight provided painters and critics with a choice between the academic world and individual freedom and expression. The *New York Herald* called them “men of the rebellion,” and The Eight issued a statement to the press which read, “We don’t propose to be the only American painters by any means, but we do say that our body includes men who think, who are not academic…and who believe above all that art of any kind is an expression of individual ideas of life.”

Seven paintings by Sloan were among the sixty-three works on view at Macbeth Gallery. These included his 1907 works: *Hairdresser’s Window, Sixth Avenue* (figure 21), *The Cot* (figure 22), and *Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street* (figure 23). The subject matter Sloan chose to represent in the exhibition provided social commentary on life among lower-class New Yorkers. He did not exhibit any seascapes or landscapes with The Eight. Later in 1916 he painted and displayed landscapes at Gallery-on-the-Moors in Gloucester. During this time in New York, he typically did portraits and genre scenes; however, a few paintings depicting ferries are seen in his 1905-1906 work, *Ferry Slip, Winter* (figure 24) and his 1907

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painting, *The Wake of the Ferry No. 2* (figure 25). Both of these works have a somber, dark color palette, and portray the ferry Sloan used to take from New Jersey to Philadelphia. These paintings may reflect his longing for Philadelphia, as he began these shortly after moving to New York. Sloan’s future Gloucester landscapes and seascapes denote a happier and more content time in his life, as represented in his color palette and subject matter as we will see in succeeding chapters.

*Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street* depicts a drunken woman in the middle of the street holding a pail of beer. The women dressed in fancy clothes on the right side of the composition are laughing at her while the men behind them look on. Sloan captured the essence of this district in New York, which showcased people from all social classes and the divisions between them. Sloan continued to depict the lower class in his works and *Hairdresser’s Window, Sixth Avenue* is no exception. This painting displays Mme. Malcomb bleaching hair, which provided spectators with amusement in this poor section of New York. Today, we would have never known this activity provided entertainment if Sloan had not painted this event.

In 1907, Sloan painted a variety of genre scenes. *Hairdresser’s Window, Sixth Avenue* and *Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street* were radical in subject matter and invoke feelings of shock, curiosity, and wonder compared to earlier works from the same year, such as *Easter Eve* (figure 26) and *Throbbing Fountain, Madison Square* (figure 27). *Easter Eve* and *Throbbing Fountain* appear inoffensive as they depict family-oriented activities. *Easter Eve* depicts a couple in the rain looking to buy flowers, last minute before Easter. *Throbbing Fountain, Madison Square* displays people of all ages enchanted by the fountain as they

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circle around it. Even though all four paintings deal with different themes, they all depicted women.

Janice M. Coco, scholar and professor states, Sloan was afraid of women and looked to them from afar. In her book, *John Sloan’s Women: A Psychoanalysis of Vision* (2004), she discussed his genre scenes and how they had underlying themes concerning privacy, class, gender, and spectatorship. It is important to discuss Sloan’s view on women since he depicted them in his future works in Gloucester. Coco believes “Sloan’s spectatorship extended a childhood need to grasp basic human issues into an adult venue, thus connecting his secretive gaze to sexual identity and a drive for knowledge.” “Looking became a way to understand the opposite sex and served, ultimately, as a tool to shape his own masculinity,” which Coco acquired from the psychoanalysts Robert Lane’s, Otto Fenichel’s, and Sigmund Freud’s theories.

*Throbbing Fountain, Madison Square*, though seemingly innocent, has sexual connotations according to Coco. Sloan described in a diary how he spent hours watching the fountain, “feeling its sensuous charm” and the fountain had a “hypnotic property in fixing the gaze.” From these statements, Coco concludes the sprouting water from the fountain was phallic in nature. In *Hairdresser’s Window, Sixth Avenue* (figure 21), Coco believes this painting had implications of sex and danger. In the early twentieth century, hair coloring

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83 Ibid., 13.
84 Ibid., 61.
85 Ibid., 63.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 67.
was considered unsafe, due to the chemicals in the products.\textsuperscript{89} Sloan tried to suppress his own fear and anxiety of women and the danger of the profession of the hairdresser by framing her in a window and putting her on view. A possible reason why Sloan used windows to contain his women is because he had control over them, something he might not have had in his own life. He was having problems with his alcoholic wife, Dolly, and his art reflected this as seen in his 1907 works, \textit{Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street} and \textit{Hairdresser’s Window, Sixth Avenue}. It is interesting to note when he is in Gloucester, his women on canvas are free and one with nature.

\textbf{Ashcan Aesthetics}

Ashcan artists fused life experiences with their art. They scoured the city of New York, painting scenes from the ground up. Henri told them to paint life around them and as a result, these artists provided viewers with a comprehensive vision of New York in the early decades of the twentieth century. The call for the painting of modern life has its roots in the mid-nineteenth century as espoused in the French poet, painter, and art critic, Charles Baudelaire’s famous essay, \textit{The Painter of Modern Life} (1863).\textsuperscript{90} Baudelaire’s essay encouraged Édouard Manet to paint modern scenes, and his essay became an important influence on Henri, Sloan, and the Ashcan School. Ashcan artists “were social historians of their own time” and “painted life’s pleasures but were fully aware of its pains.”\textsuperscript{91} These American artists painted a variety of subject matter from popular sports, performances, parks, beaches, people from all social levels, and, most importantly, painting life as they

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 66.
experienced it. They were concerned about subject matter and the artist’s feelings towards that subject. This difference, as we will later see, will create a rift between Henri and his students.

Most Ashcan artists began their careers in the newspaper industry. While most Ashcan artists were artist-reporters, Sloan was never one. During the 1890’s, newspapers did not use photographs in their publications. This enabled artists to have financial stability in order to support their families and artwork. These artist-reporters had the job of creating an image based on the reporter’s words and made sketches at the scene, which needed to be accurate. In his study, James Tottis notes that because of their work in the newspaper industry, these artists were able to experience different social classes in a variety of activities from work to leisure.

Sloan was never an artist-reporter but worked as an illustrator, as states by Elzea and Hawkes. They believed Sloan was too slow in the field and only reported to the field if it was a complete emergency. Elzea and Hawkes states how even though he was not an artist-reporter in Philadelphia, “he had trained his visual memory to the same retentiveness as his colleagues and was able to make paintings and etchings from memory with the aid of a

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93 Ibid., 18.
95 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
quick sketch." This ability was instrumental in capturing everyday life instances, which became an integral part of his work and characteristic of the Ashcan School.

**European Influences on the Ashcan School**

A number of major European artists influenced Henri and his students. Weinberg states how the gestural brushstrokes and dark palettes of Diego Velázquez, Fran Hals, Francisco de Goya, and Honoré Daumier influenced Ashcan artists and their use of “broad, calligraphic forms” which could be drawn quickly or from memory. Rebecca Zurier, an art historian at the University of Michigan, agrees with Weinberg on the importance of these painters. Zurier discusses how Henri discovered Hals when he was studying Rembrandt in Holland. Henri writes, “Velázquez and Franz Hals made a dozen strokes reveal more than most other painters could accomplish in a thousand.” Henri conveyed to his students how “the brush stroke at the moment of contact carries inevitably the exact state of being of the artist at that exact moment into the work.”

Zurier believes Manet influenced Henri’s work since he was interested in Spanish art. Manet painted contemporary subjects but referenced Old Master paintings, especially Spanish works, with his brushstrokes and color choices. A critical part of the Ashcan School was to be an individual and not to follow one particular school. Henri believed Manet, along with Corot and Millet, were pioneers during their age since they did not do

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99 Ibid., 15.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
what was expected of them. All of these influences were passed on to his students including Sloan. Henri had the opportunity to travel abroad and as a result, generated interest and the attention of well-known European artists to many of his students. The impact of Henri and his teachings allowed his students to have confidence in their abilities as artists to go out into New York City and paint the world around them.

Sloan began working for the radical monthly left-wing political magazine, *The Masses* (1911-1918) as an art editor in 1912. A year later, Davis was hired to produce illustrations along with fellow Ashcan artist, George Bellows. Davis and Bellows produced drawings that were rough and crude in technique and subject matter. An inspiration for *The Masses*’ staff was Honoré Daumier, a nineteenth-century French Realist artist. Sloan treasured Daumier’s ability to portray human nature compassionately and how he used light to display emotions; Bellows admired his “use of gesture to ridicule the pretensions of the bourgeoisie,” and *The Masses*’ artists appreciated how he handled his medium, the lithographic crayon. Zurier states, “Daumier’s ‘autographic’ style became a kind of personal handwriting, embodying all the human qualities that made the artist great.”

Every stroke expressed a feeling, whether it was angry or sad, and Daumier left his drawings unfinished, which encouraged the artists from *The Masses* to do the same.

Daumier’s 1854 lithograph, *Parisians Appreciate More and More the Advantages of Paved Roads* (figure 28) reveals how Daumier became influential to *The Masses*’ staff. Movement can be seen through Daumier’s use of line as the viewer can imagine these Parisians walking across the street. Daumier adds humor to the drawing by depicting the

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108 Ibid., 130.
figures with their hands in the air as they walk on their tiptoes. This work does not have crisp lines, but rather Daumier used shading and light to embellish forms.

A comparison of works by Davis and Sloan as art contributors to *The Masses* shows influences of Daumier and Henri. Stuart Davis’s *Jersey City Portrait* (figure 29) and Sloan’s *Bachelor Girl* (figure 30) both portray working-class figures and have compassion in their subject matter, which was a trait of Daumier. Sloan portrayed a young woman coming home and holding up a garment and Davis depicted a woman dancer sitting in the foreground in a contemplative pose. Sloan and Davis, like Daumier, used light to convey emotions and bring forms into focus. Davis used black to show an inner struggle of her life and Sloan used subtle light to convey how this single woman has two lives, one public, and one private.109

Both artists painted the realities of life around them and brought attention to circumstances that usually go unnoticed. As observers, we are allowed to witness these events portrayed by Sloan and Davis unbeknownst to both women, as they do not make eye contact with us.

**John Sloan and Stuart Davis: Their Formative Years as Illustrators at *The Masses***

According to Henri, art is self-expression; it comes from the individual’s own interests, and artists needed to record the world around them.110 Art should not have any political ties and artists needed to be aware of conforming to groups, as it would affect their individuality.111 John Sloan understood this and vowed not to address his political concerns in his paintings.112 In the *Gist of Art*, Sloan states how he unconsciously painted his political opinions before he became a Socialist, but afterward only presented them in his drawings and

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109 Ibid., 151.
111 Ibid., 82-83.
Sloan made drawings for magazines such as *The Call*, *The Coming Nation*, and in 1912 worked for the monthly political left wing magazine, *The Masses* as an art editor. It was at this magazine that Sloan employed Stuart Davis to create covers and illustrations in 1913.

Stuart Davis became acquainted with Sloan and Henri through his father, Edward Davis. Edward Davis and his wife, Helen, both graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Helen was a sculptor and Edward was a newspaper and magazine art editor, which allowed Stuart the freedom to create art since his parents were both artists. In an interview, Stuart Davis states art was never pushed on him but always surrounded him. Edward was employed at the *Philadelphia Press* along with John Sloan, Everett Shinn, William Glackens, and George Luks, who provided illustrations for the paper and were members of the Ashcan School. In 1898, Edward attended meetings at Robert Henri’s studio since he knew Henri from antique class and the artists he worked with from the paper were part of Henri’s group. These connections will have a long lasting impact as Stuart Davis enters into their circle because of his father.

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116 Ibid., 124.
120 Ibid.
Working for *The Masses*, Davis was allowed to have artistic control over subject matter and therefore the output of his work showed a great variety. Wilkin states that Davis illustrations “ranged from deft sketches fleshed out with rich tonal contrasts, in the Ashcan School manner, to schematic line drawings that verge on being cartoons.” He worked at the magazine until 1916 when he resigned because editors wanted to put captions on his pictures. With the combined effort of artists and writers this magazine attacked conventional values, was vulgar, and as author Robert Hunter states, the contributors did not even try to appease its own board members. The subject matter portrayed involved satires about the wealthy, the poor, and outcasts such as the homeless and prostitutes. Stuart Davis comically stated that the man who started it was “a kind of idealist, a food addict, or a health nut…I’m just trying to define the general area. What the hell was his name? Piet Vlag…” Hunter believes it was John Sloan who turned the magazine around by bringing art contributors and fellow Ashcan School artists, George Bellows, Henry Glintenkamp, Glenn Coleman, and Stuart Davis to work for *The Masses*.

Davis had experience in constructing cartoons and illustrations from his training at Henri’s school and because his father was a newspaper artist. Wilkin expresses how Davis mastered “the loose, muscular drawing style—all telling contours, sharp characterization, and

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122 Ibid., 52.
124 Ibid.
dramatic tonal contrasts” which became the staple for Ashcan commercial illustrations.\textsuperscript{127} Davis’s most remembered \textit{Masses} cover, “Gee, Mag, Think of us Bein’ on a Magazine Cover!” (figure 31) from June, 1913 gave rise to controversy over its subject matter. Hunter notes editors were going to resign if this cover made it to press.\textsuperscript{128} Sloan himself was going to resign if this cover did not make it to press.\textsuperscript{129}

Magazine covers have an important function, as it is the first thing the customers see. Zurier states covers usually had an attractive woman, and this “‘pretty girl’ was a symbol of all that was ‘artificial’ in commercial art.”\textsuperscript{130} “Gee, Mag, Think of us Bein’ on a Magazine Cover!” simply depicts two Hoboken women and according to Zurier, they were a symbol of independent expression and anti-capitalist ideas.\textsuperscript{131} Davis’s stance on art was similar to what Henri was fighting for when The Eight exhibited their own work in 1908 without rules and regulations at Macbeth Gallery. They both wanted artistic freedom.

“Gee, Mag, Think of us Bein’ on a Magazine Cover!” was important because of its subject matter and caption but also in the way it was drawn and reproduced. It had a crayon quality and could never be seen as high art. Zurier believes these drawings were meant to look spontaneous and Sloan asserted it was a way to communicate between human beings and allow realities to come to life.\textsuperscript{132} The mediums, crayon and charcoal, were an attack on the academic world as they were less expensive than oil paints. Drawings in magazines

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[130]{Ibid., 41.}
\footnotetext[131]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[132]{Ibid., 127.}
\end{footnotes}
allowed art to be seen by a wide variety of people as viewers did not have to visit museums or galleries but rather could enjoy it in their own homes.

**Sloan and Henri’s Influence on Davis’s Early Career**

John Sloan’s friendship with Davis grew as they worked on *The Masses* and Sloan made an impression on Davis’s art. Karen Wilkin believes Davis’s early drawings reflected Sloan’s work because Davis painted the same broad brushstrokes, had a somber palette, had generalized forms, and Davis shared the same perception of the city who like Sloan thought of it as “a visual collage.” A comparison can be seen in Sloan’s earlier discussed work, *Hairdresser’s Window, Sixth Avenue* (figure 21) and Davis’s 1912 painting, *Chinatown* (figure 32). Both artists used a similar color palette with patches of bright color, divided their canvases into rectangular sections, and used broad brushstrokes. Davis’s Ashcan work depicts New York City realistically, as trashcans are visible on the street, posters bombard the building, and a cat sitting on a railing peers at a woman dressed in black. William C. Agee, in agreement with Wilkin, thinks Sloan and Henri influenced Davis’s early art because it was grounded in realism, was done by direct observation, was outlined, and had spatial perspective.

Another early Ashcan painting by Davis recalls many of these characteristics as defined by Wilkin and Agee. Davis’s *Consumer Coal Company* (figure 33) from 1912 displays a somber palette as the artist painted a blisterly cold winter day. Elements in the painting, such as the buildings and lights, are arranged in order to guide the viewer’s eye into the center of the composition. Men are at work shoveling coal from their carriage on this cold day, as there is only one other figure in the painting. The broad and generalized

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brushstrokes create an appearance of a snowstorm as snow falls from the building towards the workers.

Davis’s painting recalls Henri’s 1902 work, *Street Scene with Snow* (figure 34). *Street Scene with Snow* portrays a carriage trying to navigate the snow-covered street. Various figures are present but are painted out of focus, which heightens the blustery conditions of the snow. From the teachings of Henri, Davis followed in his footsteps by realistically painting an event with a somber color palette. Differences can be seen as Davis’s work contains an isolated incident while Henri’s painting portrays additional figures and action.

The 1913 Armory Show (to be discussed) and Robert Henri with his interest in great painters such as Velázquez and Manet brought many major new European artists to the attention of Henri’s students. This major exhibition caused his students, including Sloan and Davis, to look elsewhere for inspiration. Zurier believes no artist could work unconsciously without style, as Henri wanted his students to do.\(^1\) Even though Davis looked elsewhere for inspiration, Henri’s philosophies were subtly present in his career in Gloucester and beyond. The most important attribute Davis learned from Henri was to express his emotions towards his subject. His artwork in Gloucester supports this statement, as the viewer will see Davis’s own personal view and feelings about Gloucester. Another lesson Davis learned was to draw from past work and memories. Henri states, “You can learn more from yourself than you can from anyone else.”\(^2\)

Throughout Davis’s career, he returned to subjects he had already painted or drawn. This is true of a house he depicted in Gloucester, which was thought to be haunted. The

Haskell house was located on 6 Marchant Street in Gloucester and appears in *Gloucester Terraces* (figure 35), *Multiple Views* (figure 36), *New Year’s Eve* (figure 37), and *The Ghost House* (figure 38). In all of these works, this piercing tower creates a sense of drama as it towers over the city. Frequently Davis returned to imagery years after he left Gloucester and incorporated it into his mature work.

**The Maratta Color System**

Color is an effective means of expression that artists use in order to convey their viewpoint, illustrate objects realistically, or depict shadows of an object. Henri introduced Sloan and Davis to the Maratta color system in 1909. Hardesty G. Maratta created a product to be sold to artists, which contained a palette with 144 hues. Sloan was an advocate of the system and states, the Maratta palette “furnishes a simple positive means of studying Color which the long lists of disorderly pigments ordinarily manufactured never could supply. The success of the Maratta Colors is well deserved.”\(^{137}\) Sloan states in his diary from June 13, 1909, how using the Maratta system was like playing an instrument.\(^{138}\) Every time an artist used the system, they experimented with colors in order to create a picture similar to how a pianist uses different chords and keys to make music.\(^{139}\) According to a pamphlet on the Maratta system, artists would be spared time and energy since colors are premixed.\(^{140}\) John Sloan’s second wife, Helen Farr Sloan, wrote on December 6, 1966 how the system

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139 Ibid.

contained twelve pure colors, semi-neutrals (bi-colors), and neutrals (grays-hues), and a set of thirty-six colors cost about $14.40 in 1916.\textsuperscript{141}

Agee believes the Maratta system had a “chromatic circle, which was divided into twelve equal parts, which could guide the artist in choosing his hues.”\textsuperscript{142} In the pamphlet, the system was compared to octaves on a keyboard piano and a clock (figures 39-40). By looking at the clock diagram (figure 40), the viewer can understand how to choose triads of primary and secondary colors for a palette. Maratta states, “Suppose you choose R-O, Y-G, and B., as the ‘triad.’ These are now the three primaries of the Palette to be established. The secondaries are produced by mixing the R-O with the Y-G; the Y-G with the B; and the B with the R-O.”\textsuperscript{143} The artist can experiment by adding white or black to make the values of the color lighter or darker.

There are varying opinions regarding the Maratta’s color system. Henri believed it could be beneficial to students but also had concerns. He thought students would not experiment with the colors and only use what was on the surface.\textsuperscript{144} Henri urged his students to use their brains, as they would only benefit from it. An important piece of advice Henri gave was “the mind is a tool, it is either clogged, bound, rusty, or it is a clear way to and from the soul. An artist should not be afraid of his tools. He should not be afraid to know.”\textsuperscript{145}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{141}{Helen Farr Sloan, “Maratta Notes,” December 6, 1966, John Sloan Manuscript Collection, Helen Farr Sloan Library, Delaware Art Museum, 2-3.}
\footnote{143}{H. G. Maratta, “H. G. Maratta Artists’ Oil Pigments,” 1913, John Sloan Manuscript Collection, Helen Farr Sloan Library, Delaware Art Museum, 3.}
\footnote{144}{Robert Henri, \textit{The Art Spirit} (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 56.}
\footnote{145}{Ibid. , 51.}
\end{footnotes}
Agee states Davis was uncertain about the system and thought artists needed to practice how colors interacted with one another.\textsuperscript{146}

Sloan used a combination of the Maratta system along with the Dudeen color triangle (figure 41), which was introduced to him by the painter, Charles A. Winter.\textsuperscript{147} The Dudeen triangle was equilateral and the primary colors, red, blue, and yellow are located at each point. The secondary colors of orange, green, and violet were between the primaries as they would be on a circle diagram. Sloan believed this triangle was more accurate than the circle and showed an intensity of hues.\textsuperscript{148} Unlike the Maratta system, the Dudeen triangle did not have pigments attached and could not be readily used in the field. Sloan exclaims the Maratta system had accurately mixed semi-neutrals and hues, but since yellow was mixed in with hues they subsequently were lighter than ones you could mix yourself.\textsuperscript{149}

\textbf{Sloan’s Use of the Maratta System}

Sloan’s palette lightened after 1909 because of his experimentation with Maratta’s color system. On the edge of the canvas there is an inscription where Sloan states he used the Maratta triad of yellow, green, and red-purple in his 1914-1915 work titled, \textit{Near Sunset, Gloucester} (figure 1). This painting appears vibrant and full of life, which differs from his New York paintings since they had duller color palettes, as seen in his 1907 work, \textit{Sixth Avenue and Thirtieth Street} (figure 23). Sloan plays with the essence of light in \textit{Near Sunset, Gloucester} as he highlights various parts of the composition. The colors are harmonious, which allows forms to recede and brings forth others.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 122.
\end{flushleft}
In the manuscript collection of John Sloan at the Delaware Art Museum, there are numerous examples of color harmonies Sloan utilized in his Gloucester paintings. Sloan first used the Maratta system and then placed his pigments on a diagram similar to the Dudeen triangle. He would refer to this triangle when creating works of art. In their collection, I was able to examine the following; Sloan’s portable swatches of his gray scale and color harmonies, recipes for varnish, notes from Helen Farr Sloan, brochures and advertisements about Maratta’s color system, a diagram for a Hamblin box which was used to store pigments and I was able to view tubes of Maratta’s oil paint.

An example of Sloan using Maratta’s color theory can be seen in figure 42, which was used in his 1917 painting, *Hill, Main Street, Gloucester* (figure 43). The triangle reveals different values of color in a similar pattern to *Hill, Main Street, Gloucester*. The same value blue can be seen in the Mercedes as with the same value red in the building to the left, the same value orange in the building in the middle of the composition, and the same value of yellow-green used in the trees. These colors on the outer sides of the Maratta triangle are organized in a triangular position in the composition. The saturated values located in the middle of the triangle are used throughout the painting, mainly in the trees and other modes of transportation.

Careful examination of these findings illustrates Sloan’s obsession with learning basic art practices. He is investigating different relationships of color, experimenting with recipes of varnish, and, importantly, the landscape of Gloucester allowed him to practice, since Sloan was not confined or limited by the city. The success of Maratta’s colors can be seen visually in his Gloucester works as witnessed in the works discussed above. Sloan’s distinctive dark
saturated palette is replaced by a brightly colored one. Maratta’s system is the beginning phase of experimentation for Sloan, as he examines formal properties of painting.

**Conclusion**

Early formative influences on Sloan and Davis such as Robert Henri’s teachings, The Eight, the National Academy of Design, the Ashcan School, Maratta’s color system, and European influences such as Diego Velázquez, Fran Hals, Édouard Manet, and Honoré Daumier all had roles in shaping the art of Sloan and Davis. Sloan and Davis were instructed to record life and provide their own personal viewpoints. Henri gave both of these artists a practical approach in portraying realism in art; look around you and record what you see. He did not however provide them with any style. Because of this, both men pursued various European artists for inspiration. As we will see in Gloucester, each artist took with them different influences from Henri’s teachings, *The Masses*, and the Ashcan School. Davis kept Henri’s teachings in his mind but did not rely heavily on Maratta’s color theory as Sloan did. Sloan’s Gloucester works show preoccupation with formal properties of painting: how works of art should be painted is an issue of primary concern; subject matter, although important, remains secondary. Sloan and Davis were at different points in their lives when they began to vacation in Gloucester. Their art is a telling sign of these stages. These beginning influences on Sloan and Davis remain, yet one of the most important events in the history of American art takes place in New York City from February 17 through March 15, 1913: the Armory Show.
CHAPTER III

INFLUENCES: THE 1913 ARMORY SHOW

“In getting together the works of the European Moderns, the Society has embarked on no propaganda. It proposes to enter on no controversy with any institution. Its sole object is to put the paintings, sculptures, and so on, on exhibition so that the intelligent may judge for themselves, by themselves.”

Arthur B. Davies, the President of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors (AAPS) articulated this statement regarding the 1913 Armory Show, which took place in New York from February 17 through March 15. On view were more than twelve hundred American and foreign works which ranged from Ingres, Renoir, Monet, Degas, Van Gogh, Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, Brancusi, and Braque to Duchamp, Glackens, Hartley, Ryder, Bellows, Sloan, and Davis. For both Sloan and Davis, this exhibition was a pivotal event. They were exposed to well known and never before seen works of art by masters of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism. Sloan and Davis each studied this first large-scale retrospective of major European and American nineteenth- and twentieth-century works in the United States and created works in Gloucester inspired by what they saw and learned in New York.

Their works in Gloucester reflect the impact of the Armory Show. Stuart Davis explains how the show was important by stating it was an “experience of Freedom” and “it may be the correct coordinate for redirection; --or at least an interim protective charm against the ghoulish ‘Return of the Figure,’ Disney-American Realisms, and other gruesome

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nostrums being hawked-about these days.”\textsuperscript{151} Sloan states that for him it was “the beginning of a journey… The blinders fell from my eyes and I could look at religious pictures without seeing the subjects. I was free to enjoy the sculptures of Africa and historic Mexico because verisimilitude was no longer important. I realized that these things were…distorted to emphasize ideas about life, emotional qualities of life.”\textsuperscript{152}

The New York \textit{Sun} called the show a sensation and it was one not to be missed, but not everyone admired or appreciated this exhibition.\textsuperscript{153} Kenyon Cox, an American painter and muralist, declared that the Cubists abolished painting. He said, “They deny not only any representation of nature, but also any known or traditional form of decoration. They talk of their symbolism and their soul-expression! The thing is pathological! It’s hideous!”\textsuperscript{154} The President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt also commented on the exhibition and how even though he did not understand everything, it gave hope and inspiration to American artists.\textsuperscript{155}

\textbf{The Formation of the Armory Show}

Milton W. Brown, an art historian, explains how the idea of the Armory Show began in the year 1911, and was discussed in a meeting of four artists, Jerome Myers, Elmer MacRae, Walt Kuhn, and Henry Fitch Taylor. They discussed the problems of the American artist; how they had difficulties exhibiting their work and the “general problem of getting

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{151} Stuart Davis, “Statements by Artists 1963,” in \textit{1913 Armory Show; 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary Exhibition, 1963} (Utica: Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, 1963), 95.  
\end{footnotesize}
American art out of its rut.” Members and artists were recruited and the Association of American Painters and Sculptors was created. Even though the Armory Show of 1913 was a huge success, it was this organization’s only exhibition. Arthur B. Davies was elected President; some say it was because he was financially secure but also because he was a distinguished and an independently free artist. Davies and Walt Kuhn went abroad to help secure works along with the artist and critic, Walter Pach, who was already living in Paris. Without Pach, Davies and Kuhn could not have obtained the works of art that they did. Pach had connections to the Steins, Brancusi, Duchamp, and other artists and collectors. In ten days, they secured works by Cézanne, Gauguin, Renoir, Delaunay, Picabia, Matisse, Vuillard, and Léger to name a few.

The 69th Regiment Armory on Lexington Avenue and 25th Street was the site of the Armory Show during the months of February and March of 1913. Brown suggests a total of 75,000 people saw the show in New York. One hundred and thirty foreign paintings were sold and thirty-five American works were sold. Brown implies that collectors began to shift their interest towards modern and contemporary art after viewing the exhibition based on the amount of works purchased. After the show closed, it then went on to Chicago and Boston. The importance of the Armory Show lived past its closing date. This was the first time on a large scale where all of the important modern European works were exhibited

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157 Ibid., 56-57.
158 Ibid., 70.
161 Ibid., 131.
together and the public was “challenged” to look at and accept them. American art was never the same after the Armory Show.

Americans were able to view works by Post-Impressionist artists, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cézanne, who were already well established in Europe. The public accepted these painters and styles but was revolted by Fauvism and Cubism. Duchamp’s painting, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* (figure 44) from 1912 received the biggest criticism. People called it “an explosion in a shingle factory,” a “pack of brown cards in a nightmare,” an “orderly heap of broken violins,” and so forth. Brown states how people made a mockery of it in order to hide their insecurities about not knowing and understanding Cubism. Frank Anderson Trapp, the art historian, describes the emotion the audience felt by stating “their curiosity was alerted, but not their love or understanding.” Another artist not accepted by the public at the exhibition was Henri Matisse. Brown believes that since the general public could not understand Cubism, it was ridiculed, but the criticism of Henri Matisse’s work was malicious, since the imagery was non-abstract but the color used was erratic and unconventional.

Matisse used color to describe, build, and decorate form. Color for him was a tool of expression. The Fauves (1904-1908) portrayed subjects familiar to those found in

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164 Ibid., 136.


Impressionist and Post-Impressionist portraits, landscapes, and genre scenes. They exploited the possibilities of brilliant colors, often juxtaposing complementary colors. Jean Leymarie, a French art historian, characterizes Fauvism into these basic principles; “an even distribution of light and construction of space by color; an all-over illumination of the flat surface, without illusionist modeling or shading; a total harmony between expression and decoration achieved by composition.” Fauves experimented with relationships of color, and even though their paintings appear erratic, they are full of joy and life. The use of line or figure did not disappear in Fauvist works, as shown by Matisse’s Blue Nude (1907).

*The Blue Nude* (figure 45) was in the Armory Show and is an exemplary illustration of Matisse’s work. The figure is sculptural and is positioned in an erotic manner with one arm bent above her head while the other arm is besides her. Matisse used the color blue to highlight different parts of her body such as her face, breasts, and thigh. The background features foliage made up of different colors, which would never exist in the wild. Jack Flam, a Matisse scholar, notices how the outline of the shape of the woman’s body echoes the shape of the foliage. Line and color give emotion to this painting and allow the viewer to become immersed into the work. This work of art was underappreciated in 1913 at the exhibition, but not by Stuart Davis.

**Influences of the Armory Show on Stuart Davis**

The Armory Show had such an impact on Davis that it deterred him from pursuing a realist style. After the show, Davis was determined to become a Modernist. Davis responded to Matisse’s work because they both used color and form non-objectively, and was inspired

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167 *Fauves* meaning “wild beasts” used color as a tool of expression. Their art was simple in nature but had an explosion of color and was not naturalistic.
by how Matisse had an “objective order” which was lacking in Davis’s own artwork. At the Armory Show, Davis saw Matisse’s 1911 painting, The Red Studio (figure 46). In response to this, Davis painted in 1917 a work titled, Studio Interior (figure 47). Both works are painted in a monochromatic color, display personal objects, but have different themes. According to Karen Wilkin, Davis substituted objects to reflect his personal interests. The clock in The Red Studio symbolized the passage of time as Matisse provided an exhibition of his works, which includes ceramics, sculptures, and paintings. Davis substituted the clock for a phonograph to reflect his interest in jazz.

Jazz influenced his artwork and is ultimately American as it originated in New Orleans. A lesson Davis learned from jazz was “at some point, one must stop studying the information and become the information.” When he was in Gloucester, Davis carried his equipment around and it became a hassle to pack and unpack his easel, canvas, and other supplies instead of painting freely. He did not abandon painting outdoors but instead took with him only a small sketchbook. Davis would then compile his paintings from his sketches, sometimes even combining multiple sketches together as we will later see.

In Gloucester, Davis painted the landscape and incorporated Modernist elements. Historian, Bonnie L. Grad believes Davis’s 1916 work, Gloucester Street (figure 48) displayed an adaptation of Fauvism by combining a modern subject with “bold color, loose

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173 Ibid., 15.
174 Ibid.
175 Ibid.
energetic brushstroke, and a tilted perspective.”

The painting portrays automobiles, a horse-drawn carriage, and a woman walking her dog with a trolley and houses in the background. The houses and trees surrounding the street are not integrated into the scene, since Davis outlined them. His brushstrokes animated the canvas, as the automobiles appear to be moving. The mixture of old and new elements appear throughout this painting as Davis took an old fashion motif (the carriage) and mixed it with new technological innovations (the automobiles) in a Fauvist style. The works of art from the Armory Show were always in his mind, which allowed him to experiment in Gloucester.

Davis painted landscapes in the Fauvist style. His 1915 work titled, Rocks, Gloucester (figure 49) and his 1916 work titled, Bowsprit (figure 50) are both landscapes and show an erratic use of color. In Rocks, Gloucester the selections of colors are a heightened one. Davis used vibrant oranges, yellows, purples, and a saturated red to convey emotion. To heighten the intensity of color, Davis used complementary colors next to each other. He placed yellow rocks in the foreground with purple rocks behind it. This work does not depict the serene environment of Gloucester but rather looks foreign as we are only permitted to look afar and experience Gloucester from Davis’s perspective. The location of this work has no identifiable landmarks and can never be found.

In Bowsprit, Davis divided the canvas into three distinct sections. The foreground appears orange with rocks that lead the viewer’s eye into the body of water, which features a multi-colored boat. The boat separates the background from the middle ground, which contains houses along a yellow path perpendicular to a gray path. The painting appears

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lively and festive because of the use of vibrant colors. The mood is optimistic and welcomes the viewer into the painting and Gloucester.

In addition to Matisse, Van Gogh, and Cézanne heavily inspired Davis at the Armory Show. Davis states,

In the case of Van Gogh the subject matter also interested me because it was fields and things I knew. My interest in Van Gogh was not solely an interest in a work of art, but in a way of expressing something I saw about me. As a result I never had the feeling that Van Gogh’s paintings was [sic] at all alien. Cézanne and the Cubists came later.¹⁷⁷

Works of art by Van Gogh, Davis saw at the exhibition, included Mountains at Saint-Rémy (figure 51, 1889) and Landscape with Figures (figure 52, 1889). By analyzing Davis’s works from 1919, Road on the Moors—Gloucester (figure 53) and Gloucester Landscape (figure 54), Van Gogh’s influence can be clearly seen. All four paintings have thick impasto brushstrokes, which create a sense of movement. Van Gogh’s paintings are simplistic, which allow his brushstrokes to heighten a sense of movement. Davis did not master this technique as his paintings are crowded and his brushstrokes are applied in multiple directions in each object. Both artists have a similar color palette with different values of green and blue painted throughout and both outlined objects in their paintings such as the trees, bushes, figures, and mountains. The viewer can see Davis’s influence from Van Gogh as he experimented with color intensities. The figures portrayed are unidentifiable as the landscape embodies them. Van Gogh’s and Davis’s views of nature demonstrate to the viewer its overwhelming forces.

Davis’s Landscape with House, Gloucester (figure 55, 1915) displays the influence of Van Gogh with his use of thick brushstrokes but it also shows the influence of Cézanne in

how he arranged shapes. One of the many works by Cézanne in the Armory Show was his late 1880’s painting titled, *View of the Domaine Saint-Joseph* (figure 56) which was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art at the exhibition. Cézanne used patches of color to create depth. He layered trees against trees against the hill, *La Colline des Pauvres*. In *Landscape with House, Gloucester*, Davis stacks hills, trees, and a house against each other as they recede into the background to create depth.

**Influences of the Armory Show on John Sloan**

John Sloan shared similar artistic influences from the Armory Show almost matching Stuart Davis’s. Curators, Rowland Elzea and Elizabeth Hawkes believe Sloan was most captivated by Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec.\(^{178}\) Grant Holcomb thinks Picasso, Braque, and Cézanne were also influential to Sloan.\(^ {179}\) Sloan learned from the exhibition to use bright and brilliant colors, to model form, and subject matter was less important than the style in how it was created.\(^ {180}\)

In the *Catalogue Raisonné* of Sloan’s oil paintings, Elzea describes how there is a clear difference between the works Sloan created before and after the Armory Show. She states, “the former is the view of an artist-reporter, concerned with the vitality and excitement of human life, the latter is the work of an intellectual, dealing with abstract problems of picture-making.”\(^ {181}\) Sloan did not have much time off during the year since he taught at the


Arts Student League in New York and did illustrations for publications.\(^{182}\) This did not allow him time to paint a large number of works. Sloan realized the Europeans had a habit of working. He said, “My way had been to wait until I had an idea for a picture. At the age of forty I realized that I needed some new way to keep at work. I saw that the European artists kept themselves going with any kind of subject (in any style).”\(^{183}\) In realizing this, Sloan was able to produce more work and studies by saving up money to paint landscapes in Gloucester.\(^{184}\)

Sloan’s *Apple Tree and Rocks* (figure 57) from 1914 recalls the art of Van Gogh. Van Gogh’s 1889 canvas, *Wheatfield and Mountains* (figure 58) shares similar compositional elements and techniques. In the center of Sloan’s composition there is a yellow house. It is hard to concentrate on the house since the brushstrokes Sloan used pull the viewer into multiple directions. Van Gogh placed houses sporadically in his painting against the mountainous backdrop. Like Van Gogh, Sloan painted quickly and used thick brushstrokes. When looking at *Apple Tree and Rocks*, the viewer can feel the wind brushing through the leaves of the trees as it circles around the landscape. Van Gogh’s use of line pulls the viewer into the work. The foreground has thick brushstrokes but as Van Gogh painted the middle and background, the use of line is subtle and this allows the viewer to focus on landscape features.

Elzea mentions how this painting lacks a figure, which was always seen in Sloan’s earlier work.\(^{185}\) She also notes how Van Gogh and Sloan both randomly painted a location to

\(^{184}\) Ibid.
\(^{185}\) Ibid., 25.
create a composition “rather than imposing compositional ideas on it.” In the *Gist of Art*, Sloan states, “Van Gogh saw nature differently. But his work doesn’t look the way nature looks. He used what he saw as a point of departure.” Both artists looked to nature as an inspiration and were concerned about how to convey nature using color, line, texture, and mass. From Van Gogh, Sloan was inspired by his technique and how to express color in nature.

Another painting by Sloan, which recalls Van Gogh, can be seen in *Frog Pond, Gloucester* (figure 59). The foliage is painted in vibrant shades of green and this differentiates the various species of plants. Texture can be seen through his brushstrokes as his lines converge towards the middle of the work. As discussed in the previous painting, the work does not contain any figures, only a spider’s web. In the *Gist of Art*, Sloan recalls this pond, “an inspiration for lush color and light.” This statement can be clearly seen as the water shimmers where the light hits it.

Elzea argues in the *Catalogue Raisonné* of Sloan’s oil paintings how like Davis, Sloan was inspired by Matisse but in a different way. Before the Armory Show, Sloan painted in New York where most of his work was figural and his paintings captured the excitement and essence of the city. In the summer of 1914 when he arrived in Gloucester, Sloan painted landscapes without figures. Elzea believes Sloan saw the work of Matisse in the Armory Show and began to paint figures again. Sloan would have seen Matisse’s 1907 painting titled, *Red Madras Headdress* (figure 60). Matisse’s woman is sitting wearing a red and yellow patterned headdress with a blue and orange floral patterned garment. This

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186 Ibid.
188 Ibid., 242.
garment also has decorative trimming consisting of leaves. Elzea claims Sloan had this painting in mind when he painted portraits of children in Gloucester.

*Gloucester Girl* (figure 61) and *Brown Sally* (figure 62) are two examples of when Sloan painted patterns in the composition of his portraits. In *Gloucester Girl*, the figure is wearing a yellow decorative sun hat with a striped purple shirt. Sloan created a design on the garment using light and shadows as they hit her garment. The curls of her hair along with the creases in her shirt allow for texture to be shown. Sally Stanton sat for Sloan multiple times in Gloucester. Sloan’s portrait of her in *Brown Sally* recalls Matisse since Sloan painted decorative leaves in the background, Sally has a “coy expression” on her face as does Matisse’s, and has a decorative pattern on her blouse. Elzea states that though these paintings reference Matisse, they show an “uncertainty and nervousness in the draftsmanship and composition.” This shows how Sloan had anxiety in the application of the new styles emerging from the Armory Show. Sloan was already an established artist who painted in the style he was most comfortable with, Realism. He found an opportunity in Gloucester to work out new ideas. Both Sloan’s and Davis’s artwork radically changed after seeing the Armory Show as they tried to embrace the styles that were emerging from Europe.
CHAPTER IV

JOHN SLOAN IN GLOUCESTER

The light-filled seaside town of Gloucester afforded John Sloan and Stuart Davis with lush views of beaches, coves, harbors, and rock formations, which allowed them to paint directly from nature. Sloan states, “Working from nature gives, I believe, the best means of advance in color and spontaneous design.”\(^{192}\) Sloan visited Gloucester from 1914 until 1918 while Davis first visited the city in 1915 and summered almost continually through 1934. This short period of time between 1915 and 1918, when both Sloan and Davis are together in Gloucester is my main focus. The two artists had a friendship of living and painting together which led to brightly colored portraits and landscapes: they shared the same subject matter and ideas about color; however their styles of painting are very different. First I will discuss Sloan’s oeuvre in Gloucester and then look at that of the younger painter, Davis.

Prior to visiting Gloucester, nearly all of Sloan’s landscapes contained people, animals, urban architecture, and vehicles of transportation such as boats, trains, and trolleys. Sloan summered in Gloucester for five years and the viewer can see both transformation and reluctance in his art as he tries to embrace new ideas and techniques. His uncertainty can be seen during his second year at Gloucester in 1915 and will be discussed in this chapter. The landscape and light of Gloucester, Maratta’s color theory, Robert Henri’s teachings about working directly from nature, and the Armory Show inspired Sloan’s portrayal of the seaside town. These influences can be discerned in Sloan’s early Gloucester landscapes which were

vistas of uninterrupted views; later he painted genre scenes and portraits of residents of Gloucester, both children and adults.

The daily life of New York City comprised a large body of Sloan’s pre-Gloucester work. After the 1913 Armory Show, he understood the imperative need to continuously work as an artist, but his job obligations in New York did not allow him much free time to paint. Sloan states, “Of course, I painted portraits of friends and did some small landscapes when I had a week or two off in the summer. I made up my mind to save enough money to take a few months off to paint landscapes in Gloucester.”

Sloan came to Gloucester on the recommendation of Charles Allan Winter, friend, artist and co-worker from The Masses. John Loughery believes Gloucester was an escape for Sloan as Dolly had a drinking problem, which created a hardship on their marriage. Gloucester benefited both of them as Sloan had new subject matter to paint, was able to get away from the political turmoil in New York, and Dolly needed both time away from the city as well as affection from Sloan.

The Red Cottage

Together Sloan, his wife, Dolly, and Charles and Alice Winter rented the Red Cottage from 1914-1918 located at 252 East Main Street in Gloucester, (figure 63) which will be their home in Gloucester during those summers. A year later, Stuart Davis, his brother, Wyatt, and his mother Helen joined the Sloan’s. The Red Cottage hosted other visitors such as artists, Agnes Richmond, Paul Cornoyer, Leon Kroll, and F. Carl Smith, the composer, Paul Tietjens, and the pianist, Katherine Groschke (figure 64).

This diverse group discussed

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technical aspects of painting and encouraged each other in their own artwork. The new setting and camaraderie had a profound impact on Sloan’s work. In the five years Sloan summered in Gloucester, he produced “292 paintings that he thought worth keeping.” In the previous twenty-four years of Sloan’s career, he painted a total of 246 paintings from 1890 through 1914. By looking at these numbers, it can be determined that Sloan’s new inspiration in Gloucester spurred him to paint more than he ever painted before.

Sloan’s Early Landscapes from New Jersey

Prior to his stay in Gloucester, Sloan had painted directly from nature. In the summer of 1908, John and Dolly Sloan visited a family friend, Joe Laubs in Coytesville, New Jersey. Sloan writes in his diary from June 19, 1908, “I get great pleasure out of my industry in this making of sketches. The cliffs below and New York across the river are limitless in the interesting effects of light and haze.”

Cliffs of the Palisades (figure 65) was made on this trip and Hudson from the Palisades (figure 66) may have been finished on a later date as states in Sloan’s diary on July 26, 1908, “I worked on my two largest Coytesville ‘Hudson From Palisades’ paintings the greater part of the day. Tired myself out, standing up. I have not worked at the easel for so long that it was fatiguing.” Both paintings have thick brushstrokes, are hastily drawn, the colors are muted and saturated, and there is no sense of drama or excitement as we will see in his Gloucester paintings.

A trip was made to Belmar, New Jersey in 1911 to visit Stuart Davis’s family. Sloan drew directly from nature as seen in his 1911 seascape, Gray Day, Jersey Coast (figure 67) which contrasts heavily with Sloan’s 1916 work, Cove, Rocky Neck (figure 68) from

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198 Ibid., 233.
Gloucester. These two seascapes are from different periods in Sloan’s life and display how his development and time spent in Gloucester altered his art. Gloucester with its picturesque landscape offered Sloan an opportunity to experiment with color, perspective, and technique. Both works contain multiple values of color but are at different intensities. They each contain boats in the foreground but in *Gray Day*, there are figures (the boy standing is Stuart Davis) and in *Cove, Rocky Neck*, Sloan provides the viewer with a panorama of the sea and landscape. A narrative can be seen in both paintings as boys in *Gray Day* play on their boat while an imminent storm approaches. The abandoned boat in *Cove, Rocky Neck* offers various situations of how it came to be deserted. This painting could symbolize how Gloucester can be beautiful with its picturesque coves and beaches but the deserted boat reminds the viewer how the sea and Mother Nature can be dangerous.

Stylistically, these two paintings are dissimilar. The main focus of *Cove, Rocky Neck* is the interplay of light and shadow. Several values of color make up a single object. The cliffs contain numerous colors such as pinks, purples, oranges, and yellows. The bottom of the cliff is saturated which contrasts the top since; the sun is directly hitting it. Certain areas of the boat are brighter depending where the sun strikes it. A seascape Van Gogh painted in 1890, *Bank of the Oise at Auvers* (figure 69) displays influences Sloan absorbed in his own art since texture is expressed through his brushstrokes. In Sloan’s *Cove, Rocky Neck*, the viewer can feel the smooth texture of the boat, the fluffy clouds, the jagged rocks, and the grainy texture of the sand. Van Gogh’s *Bank of the Oise at Auvers* has texture displayed in the trees, water, boats, and garments of the figures because of the impastoed application of paint. The direction and shape of the brushstrokes are exaggerated by the alternation

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between thick and thin brushstrokes. Texture is lacking in Sloan’s early landscape painting, *Gray Day* since he painted with long bands of colored strokes.

Shifts are seen in Sloan’s oeuvre in New Jersey to that of Gloucester. Sloan painted what appealed to him including the city, harbor, cliffs, rock formations, adults and children of the seaside town, animals, and genre scenes in the five years he summered in Gloucester. In his early works in Gloucester, Sloan portrayed the landscape without human presence, which provided a pristine view of nature. In 1916, we will see an increasing volume of work dedicated to different uses of land as Sloan portrayed its shipping harbor and the impact of visitors. During this year, Sloan paints genre scenes of the bustling city, which hinted at the overpopulation of the once quiet Gloucester. The amount of work decreases in his last years in Gloucester from 1917-1918, but still provides panoramic views of the seaside city, as the viewer will see at the end of this chapter.

**Sloan’s First Year in Gloucester—1914**

When Sloan first came to Gloucester in 1914, there was an explosion of work. Instead of waiting for inspiration he went out and found it. He told his second wife, Helen Farr Sloan, how his time spent in Gloucester was largely experimenting with new color theories and expressing texture, light, and form.\(^{200}\) Sloan states, “I was often painting two pictures a day, sometimes 26 x 32”—deeply interested in the study of color. The preparation of the palette took at least forty-five minutes and then I would paint for three hours.”\(^{201}\) His Gloucester paintings of 1914 were filled with lush colors and light. He used color as if it were line and many of his works from this year express eagerness and excitement.


\(^{201}\) Ibid.
His 1914 painting, *Fog on the Moors* (figure 70) displays his experimentation of using color as line and has loose energetic brushstrokes. In *Fog on the Moors*, Sloan painted a path between numerous rocks, which leads our eye into the picture plane. Each rock is outlined in color and is made up of various hues. In the center of the foreground, the viewer can see the middle rock is made up of multiple values of blue, green, and purple. As our eye proceeds to the background, the landscape becomes out of focus, which contrasts with the more carefully delineated rocks in the middle and foreground.

During this 1914 summer in Gloucester Sloan began to experiment with classical properties in art. He arranged numerous elements in order to create balance in his composition. This can be seen in his 1914 painting, *Path Through Rocks and Bushes* (figure 71) and was inspired by Van Gogh, Cézanne, and the landscape of Gloucester. Sloan clearly painted a foreground, middle ground, and background. The rocks, small green bushes, and path are on a horizontal plane. He divided the middle ground into two vertical sides, the overlapping rocks on the left and the hill with the tree on the right. The background echoes the foreground, as it is also horizontal. Sloan used line and color to create balance as Cézanne did in his 1895 work, *The Quarry at Bibemus* (figure 72). Cézanne’s painting displays rocks cascading into the background with trees placed intermittently. Both Cézanne and Sloan used a cool color palette, shaded objects to create depth, and painted with the same color intensity throughout their compositions.

Sloan’s Gloucester works are visual proof of his happy life. His wife, Dolly was less of a burden on him; his brushstrokes are carefree, the color is bright, and the subject matter is pleasant. His 1914 paintings, *Dunes at Annisquam* (figure 73), *Mother Nature* (figure 74), *The Snake’s Den* (figure 75), and *Bright Green Bush* (figure 76) are all devoid of human
presence and show a vitality of life. Sloan has immersed the viewer into nature. He does not provide us with sublime, mystical panoramic views as landscape artists did in the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century landscapes allowed spectators to escape the realities of life, as they were sublime, religious, and visually stimulating. Sloan’s landscapes were done with the intent of experimenting and provided the audience with visual snapshots of Gloucester without metaphorical implications.

Even though these four paintings were done in Gloucester, there are no key or recognizable identifiers of place, since the viewer does not see any defining landmarks linking the subject matter to Gloucester. For example, *Dunes at Annisquam* features sandy dunes with grass growing sporadically with a body of water in the background. This landscape has no significant ties to Gloucester except in its title. Dunes can be found in the United States in several different states ranging from Arizona, California, and Nevada to Michigan and Florida.

**Sloan’s Second Year in Gloucester—1915**

After Sloan’s first year in Gloucester, the subject matter of his art began to change since he allowed figures into his landscapes, painted activities, farm animals, and numerous portraits of Gloucester children. 1915 marks the first year when Stuart Davis began to summer in Gloucester with Sloan. As Sloan retreated back to subject matter he was comfortable with, his style still progressed yet, there was hesitation. Elzea states how Sloan’s work showed an “edginess, nervousness, and aggressiveness in draftsmanship and composition which disappears from next year’s work.”

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202 Ibid., 25.
Two works, which depict Sloan’s reticence, can be seen in his 1915 paintings, *Fassett’s Jewels, Gloucester* (figure 77) and *Seacoast, Gloucester* (figure 78). Both works contain rocks with bursts of color and brushstrokes in multiple directions and sizes, which created a nervous energy. Even though the compositions are simple, the viewer is overwhelmed with color and may show inspiration from Fauvism since the color looks unnatural. A typical Fauve landscape in which there is use of complementary colors can be seen in Maurice de Vlaminck’s 1905 painting, *Autumn Landscape* (figure 79). Sloan would have been familiar with his work because Vlaminck exhibited at the 1913 Armory Show. In this painting, Vlaminck applied vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow to capture the viewer’s eye, which contrast the cool colors of blue and green in the background.

If we compare Sloan’s *Fassett’s Jewels, Gloucester* and *Seacoast, Gloucester* to a painting he did a year later, *Dogtown* (figure 80, 1916), the viewer can see the environment he painted is calmer and the color is subdued. *Dogtown* depicts a vista with rolling hills whereas Sloan painted a limited viewpoint in *Fassett’s Jewels, Gloucester* and *Seacoast, Gloucester*. The landscape in *Dogtown* is naturalistic and the location is attainable since, there are no bodies of water or jagged rocks blocking our path. *Fassett’s Jewels, Gloucester* is visually stimulating; it reveals an atypical color palette for Sloan. Sloan overwhelmed the viewer with color and was overwhelmed himself with new ideas from the Armory Show.

**Portraits and Genre Scenes in 1915**

1915 is the only year, in which the viewer sees Sloan struggling with the use of color. Before and after this year, Sloan used color naturalistically but had a brighter color palette. He turned away from using Fauve colors and returned to subject matter he was familiar with, genre paintings. His 1915 painting, *The Jitney, Gloucester, Mass.* (figure 81) depicts a genre
Six figures chase after the jitney, a small bus, which would take them from Freshwater Cove to Gloucester and then around the harbor to East Gloucester. While this is a town scene, the viewer can see that Sloan is concerned with color and light. The main focus of the painting is the stark red house in the center. The shadows, figures, and bus track, all lead the viewer’s eye to the red house. Sloan complements the house with the green foliage and even the telephone poles have a green tint to them. Light and shadow interact with each other to create contrast. This is the first genre scene Sloan painted in Gloucester and foreshadows his 1917 painting, Main Street, Gloucester (figure 83). The Jitney, Gloucester, Mass. illustrates a rural dirt road with only one vehicle of transportation. In Main Street, Gloucester, the road is still dirt but there are three different vehicles of transportation, a crowd of people with police presence, and shops on both sides of the street. Gloucester has changed from a quiet getaway to a bustling small city, in only a couple years.

Sally Stanton was one of the many children who posed for Sloan in Gloucester (figure 83). In the Gist of Art, Sloan states the children who posed for him were “most appreciative critics, so easily pleased, so understanding.” Sloan captures Sally’s outgoing personality and appears energetic and joyous in The Willow Bough, Three Kids (figure 84), Sally with Clover (figure 85), and Doris and Sally, Gloucester (figure 86). In all three paintings she has a smile on her face, looks directly at the viewer, and is surrounded by nature.

Sloan painted her multiple times in his 1915 painting, Sally, Sarah and Sadie, Peter and Paul (figure 87). Sloan writes, “All the parts in this gymnastic comedy were played for

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my entertainment by Sally, her cats, and the old apple tree.”

Sally and her cats are captured in different positions, enjoying themselves in front of the Red Cottage. Sloan played with light and shadow once again as he alternates between them. *Sally with Clover* (figure 85) and *Sally in the Tree* (figure 88, 1915) are heavily patterned. In both paintings, Sally is sitting wearing a striped garment. Sloan created a pattern based on the application of his brushstrokes surrounding her. *Sally in the Tree* has the same directional brushstrokes in the tree as in her garment. In *Sally with Clover*, Sloan has created a circular pattern, which begins at the top of her garment and circles down and up into the background. Matisse, whose works challenged Sloan to start painting portraits again, could have inspired this patterning. Matisse’s 1906-1907 work, *The Madras* (figure 89) features the same woman from his 1907 painting, *Red Madras Headdress* (figure 60) which was featured at the Armory Show. In *The Madras* there is patterning on the woman’s blue and orange garment, her yellow and red headpiece, and the background is constructed of different patches of color.

Sloan’s renewed interest in figural painting can be seen in his 1915 work, *Croquet, Gloucester* (figure 90). This painting portrays two unidentifiable women playing croquet. An area of land has been altered for their amusement, as surrounding grass is longer and overgrown. Nature is emphasized as these two women are encircled by lush colors even though their garments are muted.

**Sloan’s Portraits of Animals in Gloucester**

In addition to portraying humans in his art, Sloan enjoyed painting the pigs and cows of Gloucester. His second wife, Helen Farr Sloan reminisced about how John believed they

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205 Ibid., 245.
were much-maligned animals.\textsuperscript{206} Sloan states in the \textit{Gist of Art} that, “Cows and artists were not encouraged to associate in Gloucester. Artists sometimes left paint rags behind them and the cows who had a taste for that kind of thing were made quite ill.”\textsuperscript{207} In 1915 Sloan painted, \textit{Pigs, and Green} (figure 91) and \textit{Pig-Pen by the Sea} (figure 92). Both works portray pigs in their environment, which overlooks the pristine view of Gloucester. There are no humans visually present in the painting except we see the pig’s enclosures, which were made by human hands to keep them safe from outside predators. This contrasts Sloan’s portrayal of cows, which are seen in their natural environment. \textit{The Cow} (figure 93) and \textit{Swamp Cow} (figure 94) were both completed in 1918. In both works, the cows are grazing; unaware they are being looked at. These later works by Sloan illustrate how his color palette has changed, as they are not as bright as his earlier works, \textit{Path Through Rocks and Bushes} (figure 71) or \textit{Fassett’s Jewels, Gloucester} (figure 77).

\textbf{Gloucester’s Fishing Industry in 1916}

A transformation in style and subject matter can be seen throughout Sloan’s Gloucester years. Sloan’s early paintings representing agricultural life (figures 91-94), indicate the life of permanent residents of Gloucester. Even though Gloucester was a summer retreat, Sloan reminds us that the natives of Gloucester lived there all year round and needed stability to survive. In 1916, there are fewer paintings representing the land without figures. Instead Sloan depicts Gloucester’s economy of fishing and ships and his own income of teaching students.

\textit{Fishing Port, Gloucester} (figure 95), \textit{Gloucester Harbor} (figure 96), and \textit{Guinea Boats} (figure 97) are three works from 1916 and are a small sampling of Sloan’s portrayal of


Gloucester’s economy. *Fishing Port, Gloucester* and *Gloucester Harbor* illustrate the same area of land but Sloan changed certain elements to make his composition visually stimulating. Sloan states in the *Gist of Art*, how *Gloucester Harbor* was painted from the tallest building in Gloucester, which was about four stories high. This painting provides a central view of the harbor and surrounding areas of land. In *Fishing Port, Gloucester*, Sloan has changed our perspective and foreshortened the coal derrick. The house in front of the coal derrick has changed color as it is now white and the small area of land on the right hand side of the composition contains a beach whereas it was a forested area in *Gloucester Harbor*.

Even though the composition has changed in these two works, Sloan still portrayed Gloucester’s fishing industry and the coal derrick, which is used to move coal. In *Guinea Boats*, there are multiple boats in the harbor with a vista of Gloucester in the background. Several figures are on the dock, climbing down into the boats. These four unidentifiable men are about to go fishing in the harbor as their poles and buckets lie inside the boats. This work has an Impressionist quality since, Sloan painted with loose brushstrokes and the colors blend together, simultaneously. In all three paintings, Sloan shows not just majestic views of Gloucester but also its economy.

**Sloan’s Students in Gloucester**

To earn extra income during the summer, Sloan taught students in Gloucester. In 1914 he had only one student, Beulah Stevenson and by 1915 he accumulated five students and in 1916 he had only three. Sloan painted an increasing number of portraits between

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208 Ibid., 245.
1916 and 1918, which included those of his students. His 1916 works, *Dorothy Shanahan* (figure 98), *Helen Taylor Sketching* (figure 99), and *Nell in Red* (figure 100) demonstrate Sloan’s range in portraiture. In *Dorothy Shanahan*, Dorothy is gazing directly at the viewer as Sloan has painted her indoors. He created a pattern using line in the background, which coincides with the vertical lines on her garment. She is dressed simply while holding a flowered object. From the portrait, we can infer, Dorothy is not poor as her appearance is well kept, has a bracelet on her arm, and has money to pay for art classes.

*Helen Taylor Sketching* and *Nell in Red* both feature Sloan’s student, Helen Taylor. In *Helen Taylor Sketching*, Helen concentrates on her art as she stands on a hill by a body of water. Various hues of green are painted in the foreground as Sloan has embedded Helen into the landscape since the grass has become intertwined with her garment. Sloan portrayed Helen as an artist but then represented her as a sitter in *Nell in Red*. She sits in nature, her hat besides her, her arm bent over a rock, gazing directly at the viewer. Helen looks relaxed, carefree, and happy as she poses for Sloan. These three portraits of Sloan’s summer students depict different environments, poses, and feelings about each sitter. Sloan has progressively abandoned painting strictly landscapes as figures become more prominent in his work.

**Genre Scenes of 1917**

During the summer of 1917, Sloan painted numerous genre scenes in Gloucester and an increasing number of scenes with houses embedded in the land. This change in subject matter could reflect Sloan’s emotional state of feeling confined, as there was increasing population of artists in Gloucester. Sloan states, “There was an artist’s shadow beside every cow in Gloucester.”210 Sloan than reverted his subject matter to what he was most familiar

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with in New York, genre scenes. His 1917 works, *Hill, Main Street, Gloucester* (figure 43), *Passing Through Gloucester* (figure 101), and *Gloucester Trolley* (figure 102) all have automobiles, a sense of motion, and portray Gloucester as a quaint town.

Sloan recalls *Hill, Main Street, Gloucester* was painted on the spot and the driver of the blue Mercedes was Randall Davey, an artist who painted in Gloucester.\footnote{John Sloan, *Gist of Art* (New York: American Artists Group Inc., 1939), 249.} Birds flock in the street as two women walk on the sidewalk, one glancing at the blue automobile. This painting contrasts the old and new as there is a horse and carriage on the left and a blue Mercedes going down a hill. It is strange for us to view these two vehicles of transportation together as they are from different time periods. Sloan was familiar with seeing automobiles in the city, but they were just appearing in the country. While Sloan was trying to get away from the bustling city of New York, signs of urban life inevitably were seen in Gloucester.

*Hill, Main Street, Gloucester, Passing Through Gloucester, and Gloucester Trolley* all have a sense of motion whether it is from automobiles, trolleys, or citizens running or walking. Sloan tried to express the uniqueness of Gloucester but still had to reflect change. In *Passing Through Gloucester* two women on the sidewalk look to the crowded car. They appear startled and jealous as the woman wearing the dark colored coat, places her arm around the other woman’s shoulders. The viewer can still see the quaint town as stacks of houses and trees appear in the background.

Looking back on his Gloucester paintings, Sloan realized what he was painting was history of a once quiet seaside town. In the *Gist of Art* he states of his *Gloucester Trolley* painting that, “This, too, is history. The trolleys from Rocky Neck are gone now, buses have
replaced them. No doubt the same summer visitor type of crowd fill the buses. A crowd of children and adults flock to the trolley including Reddy, one of the many children Sloan painted. He runs across the tracks, hoping to get on the trolley. Sloan’s painting embraces the brightness of color he learned from studying modern European works at the Armory Show while portraying this genre scene. Some of the figures are awkwardly posed and look unnatural as seen in the woman wearing a green coat in the foreground. She looks stiff and wooden walking across the tracks.

**Sloan’s Last Year in Gloucester—1918**

By 1918, the amount of work Sloan produced in Gloucester diminishes, completing only about thirty works. A possible reason for this may be World War I and problems at home with his wife. Most of his portraits are no longer in the landscape and there are a few works without human presence. His 1918 works, *Big Apple Tree* (figure 103) and *Roses and Rock* (figure 104) demonstrate how Sloan kept his bright color palette and emphasized light and shadow. Both of these canvases have a naturalistic tone compared to his 1917 genre paintings discussed earlier, which look like cartoons.

Sloan captured the essence of Gloucester in these landscapes, as they are simplistic, show movement, and capture the light of Gloucester. In *Big Apple Tree*, the color combinations and brushstrokes recall Van Gogh. Van Gogh’s 1889 painting, *Cypresses* (figure 105) and Sloan’s work both use brushstrokes and color to create patterns, shapes, and movement. The cypresses and the apple tree tower over nature and become the prominent focus in each work. Van Gogh’s thick brushstrokes does not overwhelm the viewer, since his composition contains negative space. The cypresses are powerful and can be described

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212 Ibid., 252.
by their olive green color and are delineated by swirling black strokes, which illustrate movement in these old trees. Sloan used the spectrum of the rainbow when completing his work as various colors make up a single object as seen in the tree and grass. He too used black in his composition and this can be seen in the tree trunks and branches, which enhances the curvature and movement of these apple trees.

Sloan continued using a bright color palette in his portraits as seen in his 1918 works, *Gwendolyn* (figure 106) and *Dolly, Red Blouse* (figure 107). In these two portraits, the viewer is facing forward, gazing directly at the viewer. Sloan created a patterned background by using different hues. Differences can be seen as Sloan used color harmonies in *Dolly, Red Blouse* to contrast the background, which consists of values of green and blue to the red hue of Dolly’s blouse. In Gwendolyn’s portrait he used the same hues in her dress. These later portraits do not feature the same charismatic sitters as we have seen in earlier portraits in Gloucester. Sally Stanton, Helen Taylor, and Dorothy Shanahan all have smiles on their faces while Dolly and Gwendolyn have cold glare on theirs.

According to Loughery, he believes the growing number of artists in Gloucester, Dolly’s “benders” with alcohol and World War I (1914-1918) were reasons why Sloan and Dolly left Gloucester after the summer of 1918.213 Sloan’s friend, Randall Davey recalls spending time with the Sloan’s “involved too much politics, too many moods, and too many emotional upheavals.”214 The war impacted Gloucester as it had on the rest of the United States. Loughery states, after a tug and three barges off the coast of Cape Cod sunk in July of 1918, there was a growing number of resentment towards visitors not helping with the war

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214 Ibid., 209.
If a man was not employed and not in the army, police would harass them about joining the war effort. Loughery recalls how the police picked up Dolly while walking with a few men after dark. They believed they were signaling U-boats. This close encounter was a wakeup call for the Sloan’s.

Gloucester was an escape for Sloan and his wife to get away from turmoil but it seemed they could not avoid it. To fill the void of traveling during the summer, Sloan decided to go to Santa Fe on Robert Henri’s recommendation in 1919. Henri had been traveling there since 1916 and praised Santa Fe for their cheap rent, pleasant neighbors, and landscapes. Taking everything he learned in Gloucester, Sloan left and summered in Santa Fe every year except 1933 and 1951.

Tribulations in Paintings: Changing Physical Properties of Gloucester

In the *Gist of Art*, Sloan exclaims how artists should not look far for inspiration and subject matter. He states, “Look down the road and use your imagination. Get some excitement from the reality in front of you, the geometry of the forms. Get a kick out of the textures of the materials. Feel the power of nature, the sunlight, and wind.” Many of his Gloucester works, were a short distance away from the cottage as seen in his 1916 work, *Our Red Cottage* (figure 108) and his 1917 work, *Dolly by the Kitchen Door* (figure 109). Both of these paintings feature Sloan’s home for the summer, the Red Cottage. *Our Red Cottage* portrays the house as quaint, small, and seems almost majestic as the house towers above the overgrown bushes. By comparing this painting to the documentary photograph of the house

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215 Ibid., 243.
216 Ibid., 246.
217 Ibid.
218 Ibid.
(figure 63), the viewer can see the house is actually quite large. In the painting, bushes obstruct our view of the two windows located on the left seeing as Sloan foreshortened the house. To make the house visually appealing, he included the patio on the right and used a repetition of shapes such as triangles, squares, and rectangles throughout the exterior of the house.

The Red Cottage still stands in Gloucester and is visited by tourists, since it is part of the Rocky Neck Historic Art Trail. Current photographs taken of the house (figures 110-111) illustrate how the Red Cottage itself has not changed but physical elements surrounding it have. The house was painted a vibrant red, which matched the same color Sloan painted in his paintings and the current owners left the bushes in front of the windows but were trimmed for winter. Trees and shrubs have been added, the front yard has been re-leveled (this can be seen by counting the number of rocks in the wall that borders the yard from the street), a brick path has been added leading to the back kitchen door, and the porch where all of the artists once stood in a photograph (figure 64) has been taken down. Overtime the physical nature of objects diminishes and needs to be replaced. By analyzing Sloan’s paintings, it is difficult to accurately discern what has changed from actual sites to meet his artistic needs. There have been some documentary photographs taken during Sloan’s stay in Gloucester, which will distinguish Sloan’s reality from what actually was in existence during his years there.

**Compositional Elements**

Sloan changed his compositions to make his artwork visually appealing while compromising the location and appearance of objects in their natural surroundings. In Sloan’s oeuvre of Gloucester, a steeple and tower appear numerous times in his work even
though, spatially they are not always correct. In the *Gist of Art*, Sloan states, “Good composition is the result of good thinking: some considerations of major geometrical forms; the balancing of spaces and volumes, lights and darks, lines, textures, and colors. Design is an engineering problem.”

By looking at a documentary photograph of the cottage (figure 112), the viewer can see how Sloan rearranged compositional elements in *Dolly by the Kitchen Door*. The white house, which appears in the painting, should entirely block our view of the tower and steeple. Sloan however, displayed the tower and steeple in the center between the houses and closer than in actuality.

The tower and steeple also appear in Sloan’s 1914 paintings, *Sunflowers, Rocky Neck* (figure 113), *Glimpse of Gloucester Trolley* (figure 114), *Balancing Rock, Gloucester Harbor* (figure 115) and his 1918 painting, *Rocks and Willows* (figure 116). In all of these paintings, the steeple and tower appear in the background. These architectural elements render visual appeal while creating depth in each work. Today, the tower belongs to Gloucester City Hall and the steeple belongs to Saint Ann Parish. When walking towards Rocky Neck from Main Street, the tower and steeple were clearly visible (figure 117) but not from the steps at the Red Cottage (figure 118). Higher ground had to be achieved for viewing the steeple and tower at the Red Cottage but due to personal property provisions, a photograph could not be attained.

Sloan in Gloucester began to be concerned with classical stylistic traits such as harmony, balance, and drama in terms of perspective, mass, line, and space. His paintings are formulated to meet these properties and are carefully planned out. When viewing *Sunflowers, Rocky Neck* and *Balancing Rock, Gloucester Harbor*, the viewer can see how

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Sloan enlarged the steeple and tower while changing architectural elements located on the bank of the water. In *Sunflowers, Rocky Neck*, Sloan made the white and red house triangular, (figure 119) which enhanced the verticality of the steeple and tower while framing the sunflowers. These sunflowers add a brightness of color and may have reminded Sloan of Van Gogh’s 1888 or 1889 painting, *Sunflowers* (figure 120). In *Balancing Rock*, he made the same houses rectangular (figure 121). By changing the shape of these houses, Sloan has compromised their natural appearance in order to make his compositions visually stimulating.

*Twin Lights—Purple Rocks* (figure 122, 1915) is another example where Sloan changed the physical properties of Gloucester. The Cape Ann Museum in Gloucester has an assortment of early twentieth-century photographs in their Herman W. Spooner Collection. By analyzing a photograph from their collection, (figure 123) it can be easily deduced that Sloan changed spatial distances in *Twin Lights—Purple Rocks*. By altering the distance, he used space to allow the viewer to have a break in between the rocks and island. The purple rocks in the foreground direct the viewer’s eye into the picture plane towards Thatcher’s Island. If Sloan had painted the island accurately, it may have overpowered his use of brilliant colors as represented in the rocks and the painting would not have depth. Sloan used a variety of hues in different values to highlight texture in the rocks. The body of water is painted a rich blue and complements the green rocks and Thatcher’s Island. Living in Gloucester for the summer without any job obligations, allowed Sloan to carefully compose properties of art such as line, shape, color, and perspective, and to experiment with them.

**Conclusion**
Sloan’s five years in Gloucester had a profound effect on his art. He was able to escape city life and fully concentrate on style and technique. The first year he painted, Sloan created splendid works of art capturing Gloucester’s light and landscape. His palette was no longer dark as he painted a variety of landscapes and seascapes inspired by examples of well-known nineteenth- and twentieth-century painters from the Armory Show and Maratta’s color system. By 1915, Sloan’s artwork showed concerns and conflicting thoughts finally resolved. The figure was now back as Sloan portrayed children, animals, and genre scenes in Gloucester.

In Sloan’s genre scenes, the viewer can begin to understand what life was like in Gloucester and how figures interacted with the environment. When Sloan reverted back to this subject matter, he lost the spirit of this seaside city. His figures sometimes looked awkward or wooden as seen in *Gloucester Trolley* (figure 102). These genre scenes were not as strong as figures he painted in nature (*Nell in Red*, figure 100, 1916) or landscapes devoid of humans (*Dogtown*, figure 80, 1916). These works portray Sloan embracing nature and his surroundings. As years passed in Gloucester, his artwork showed a growing concern of population growth. Instead of depicting Gloucester’s pristine landscapes, Sloan began to portray its economy and his later works had an increased number of figures, houses, and vehicles of transportation.

Sloan’s Gloucester journey unveiled works of art, which would never have developed if Sloan remained in New York. Five years in Gloucester with its lighthouses, cottages, sunlight, schooners, coves, mountains, harbors, and streets, provided Sloan with time to experiment and paint its landscape in numerous works. He could never have fully changed his Realist style as Stuart Davis did in Gloucester. By the time Sloan left Gloucester in 1918,
he was forty-seven while Davis was beginning his career at twenty-six. In spite of new
color and innovations in technique, his art training, the war, his wife, his age all contributed
to Sloan sticking to his Realist roots.
Stuart Davis and John Sloan shared multiple influences, yet each produced a distinct oeuvre in Gloucester. We have now seen how Sloan adapted and applied motifs and stylistic elements of masters from the late nineteenth- and early twentieth centuries. His Gloucester paintings are characterized by a bright color palette and thick expressive brushstrokes, yet his success with these was marginal compared to that of Stuart Davis. It was the later who became a Modernist painter in Gloucester. An examination of similar subjects painted by both Stuart Davis and John Sloan in Gloucester reveals their radical differences.

Before traveling to Gloucester, Davis already experimented with new ideas emerging from the 1913 Armory Show when he visited Provincetown, Massachusetts in 1913 and 1914. Davis expresses how Gloucester

Had the brilliant light of Provincetown, but with the important additions of topographic severity and the architectural beauties of the Gloucester schooner. The schooner is a very necessary element in coherent thinking about art. I do not refer to its own beauty of form but to the fact that its masts define the empty sky expanse. They made it possible for the novice landscape painter to evade the dangers of taking off into the void as soon as his eye hits the horizon.  

Gloucester provided Davis with both natural and architectural elements he needed to become a renowned American Modernist. During his Gloucester years, Davis’s art exhibited studies of Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism. I have already states these influences on Davis’s art in chapter three with the exception of Cubism, which will be discussed in this chapter. The light, architecture, landscape, and stackable houses embedded into the hills of Gloucester, inspired Davis to experiment. Davis kept to his Realist roots by portraying

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garages, gas pumps, and recycled the same mundane motifs in his art during his stay in Gloucester and beyond. We will first look at landscapes by Davis, which are devoid of influences from the Armory Show, and then we will look at his landscapes painted in Provincetown, and finally his evolution as a painter in Gloucester.

**Early Landscapes—1910-1911**

His 1910 works, *Gleam on the Lake* (figure 124) and *The Berkshires* (figure 125) are reminiscent of Sloan’s early landscapes from Coytesville, New Jersey (figures 65-66), since they depict the interplay of light and shadow, saturated colors, and illustrate atmospheric effects. They are devoid of human presence and offer a panoramic view of nature. In *Gleam on the Lake*, Davis used multiple values of blue and white to illuminate where the sun hits the body of water. A building is placed between two trees without leaves, which gives verticality to the composition.

Like Sloan, Davis used different values of color to make up a single object. This can be seen in the foreground of *The Berkshires* as the grass is made up of blue, red, and green. Davis used the same values of green and red in the mountains. The green sky portrayed in *The Berkshires*, invokes mood as it looms over the mountains, almost outlining them. Both Sloan and Davis used atmospheric effects to enhance the setting of their landscapes by painting different times of day and weather patterns.

*Windy Day* (figure 126) from 1911 recalls Davis as an illustrator. In this painting two figures in the foreground are outlined in black, as he would have done in an illustration. *Windy Day* has similarities to Sloan’s 1908 work, *Our Home in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania* (figure 127). Both works have a saturated color palette, expressive brushstrokes, and feature similar compositional elements. In these two works, a house can be
seen on the left with figures in the foreground and trees on the right. Sloan has longer, more expressive brushstrokes than Davis and his work seems hastily done while Davis’s painting is more detailed.

Davis’s 1910 watercolor, *At the Museum* (figure 128) and his 1911 watercolor, *Theater Crowd* (figure 129) both display his tendency of outlining. *At the Museum* features two men and two women contemplating works of art. Davis outlines the figures, which contrasts the paintings on the walls since they are not outlined. This allows the viewer to focus on the figures’ gestures and fashions. Davis used the same technique of outlining in *Theater Crowd*. The crowd is diversified as people of all ages try to make their way into the theater doors. Contrasting the harsh black line to the soft background gives prominence to the figures and embellishes the color of their garments.

In *Windy Day*, the mother and child are outlined and dressed in warm colors, which advances them forward in the composition. They seem as if they can walk right off the canvas and escape the tumultuous wind. Davis continued his use of outlining in his Gloucester works to define shapes. This can be seen in his 1916 works, *Summer House* (figure 142) and *Sketch—Church Tower* (figure 153) and will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Stuart Davis in Provincetown, Massachusetts—1913-1914**

Davis summered in Provincetown, Massachusetts in 1913 and 1914. Wilkin states Davis chose Provincetown, a seaside town to work out new ideas from the Armory Show in isolation and it was a bohemian summer escape for artists.\(^{223}\) In his 1945 autobiography Davis states,

\(^{223}\) Ibid., 55.
Provincetown was a new experience for me, and made me a continuing addict of the New England coast. On clear days the air and water had a brilliance of light greater than I had ever seen, and while this tended to destroy local color, it stimulated the desire to invent high intensity color-intervals. 224

His 1913 canvases, A River View (figure 130) and Ebb Tide—Provincetown (figure 131), and his 1914 painting, Harbor Scene (figure 132) illustrate how Davis began to assimilate ideas from the Armory Show into his work. A River View portrays a cityscape overlooking a harbor with boats while a horse grazes in the foreground. This painting combines old and new artistic influences since the foreground and middle ground display dark brooding colors, reminiscent of the Ashcan School; and the city is painted with bright oranges and yellows. These seem to allude to Fauvism as art historian; Jean Leymarie believes Fauvist artists had a freedom of handling and choosing color, which were often pure. 225 This painting shares resemblances to the 1880’s painting, In the Stable (figure 133) by American Symbolist painter, Albert Pinkham Ryder who was featured in the 1913 Armory Show. Ryder’s work has a ghostly appearance since he painted wet on wet. Davis, in admiration of Ryder, achieved this same appearance by using various shades of black to emphasize the contour shape of the horse’s body as Ryder attained in his painting, In the Stable.

Davis’s absorption of the bold use of colors in Fauvist landscapes is readily seen in Ebb Tide—Provincetown. Here, Davis contrasted bright values of color to the dark figure in the foreground. The man holds a pail while half of his body is in shadow, which enhances his brooding personality. Davis alternates between light and dark colors in the sand dunes and sky, which references Ryder’s 1870-1890 seascape, Moonlight Marine, (figure 134).

Another painting by Davis, which also recalls *Moonlight Marine*, can be seen in Davis’s last painting in Provincetown, *Harbor Scene*. Davis alternates between bands of color in the sea, while portraying a bustling harbor. Figures stand on boats with their equipment, waiting to go out to sea. The arrangements of boats nearly overlap each other and appear flat against the water. Some boats are not integrated into the water and look as if the viewer can cut them out. Davis outlined each object in the painting, which recalls his art as an illustrator.

While in Provincetown (1913-1914), Davis met the American Precisionist painter, Charles Demuth, who was part of Alfred Stieglitz’s inner circle. Stieglitz, a photographer and editor of *Camera Work* opened “291,” his gallery (1905-1917) on Fifth Avenue in New York, which exhibited progressive Modernist painters.²²⁶ Eighty exhibitions were held at “291” including works by Max Weber, Arthur Dove, Georgia O’Keeffe, Picasso, Braque, Brancusi, Matisse, Rousseau, and other important modern painters and sculptors. Wilkin and art historian, Patricia Hills notes how Demuth helped and encouraged Davis with new ideas about Modernism. Wilkin states Demuth was already experimenting with Cubist ideas in his own art and aided Davis who was struggling with these new concepts.²²⁷ Stuart Davis will not fully experiment with Cubism until 1916, two years later when he summers in Gloucester. Hills believes the influence went both ways. Davis’s watercolors of cabaret scenes such as his 1913 work, *Babe La Tour* (figure 135), preceded Demuth’s paintings of cabarets from 1916.²²⁸

**Stuart Davis in Gloucester**

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The following year after Provincetown, Davis joined Sloan in Gloucester in 1915. Between 1915 through 1918, Davis experimented with new ideas he had seen two years earlier at the Armory Show. His work exhibited a variety of different styles and subject matter. In Gloucester, Davis found a place where he could experiment with ideas as he progressed as an artist. Like Sloan, he was concerned with line, color, and form. Wilkin believes when Davis was in New York; he focused on details instead of seeing the whole picture.\footnote{Karen Wilkin, \textit{Stuart Davis} (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 58.} Gloucester enabled him to concentrate on key elements of painting with its uninterrupted views of the sea and landscape. During the summer of 1915, his first summer there, Davis’s work focused on simplifying color and shapes along with portraying influences of Van Gogh, Cézanne, and Matisse. Davis sometimes combined multiple styles together in a single canvas, as seen his 1915 work, \textit{Landscape with House, Gloucester} (figure 55), which was discussed in chapter three. Between 1916 and 1918, his work tentatively displayed characteristics of Cubism as he flattened objects and provided multiple views of them.

His 1915 works, \textit{Hillside Near Gloucester} (figure 136), \textit{Rocky Landscape} (figure 137), and \textit{Hillside with Trees} (figure 138) display simplified forms and brighter color palettes compared to his earlier works from 1910 through 1911 (figures 124-126). In \textit{Hillside Near Gloucester}, he stripped down his canvas and painted bands of color, which allows the viewer to focus on color, form, and line. This painting has similar features to Pablo Picasso’s far bolder 1907-1908 work, \textit{Landscape with Two Trees}, (figure 139) which was featured at the Armory Show. Even though they have different color schemes, they share bands of color and angular trees. Both feature flatten objects and abstraction. Picasso and Davis simplified
their objects into basic shapes and even though they did this, they did not lose depth in
their paintings because of the placement and size of their objects. The paintings appear
seemingly simplistic but yet are multifaceted. Davis’s painting is not as reductive as
Picasso’s, since Picasso stripped away all extraneous details. Davis juxtaposed shapes to
create a contrast of horizontal and vertical lines. He adds leaves to his trees, foliage, and
houses in the background. Davis’s paintings recalls his 1910 work, *Gleam on the Lake*
(figure 124) since they both have trees framing objects in the background.

Robert L. and *Hillside with Trees* become multifaceted as Davis fills the
entire composition with objects. *Rocky Landscape* features inspiration from Cézanne as the
landscape recedes into the background, which is comprised of bands of color and lines. This
is similar to Cézanne’s 1885-1887 canvas, *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (figure 140). Cézanne uses
patches of color to represent different landscape terrain and objects. To give texture to his
painting, he used various values of different colors in the mountain in order to display its
rocky terrain. Davis’s landscape indicates his understanding of cool and warm colors:
patches of yellow advanced in the foreground while the background is comprised of receding
blues, greens, and purples.

*Hillside with Trees* (figure 138) displays movement because of the application of
paint and multiple values of lush color. Davis alternates color to create a pattern, which
recedes into the background. To offset the horizontal nature of the painting, Davis placed
trees and wooden logs sporadically in the work. This painting and Davis’s 1915 work,
*Gloucester Landscape with Rooster and Ducks* (figure 141) are reminiscent of the work
Sloan painted during Davis’s first summer in Gloucester. Sloan painted farm animals
(figures 91-94) against the landscape and his work showed loose and expressive
brushstrokes. *Gloucester Landscape with Rooster and Ducks* presents all of these characteristics. In the foreground, a rooster and ducks are surrounded by the lush landscape. Davis used multiple values of green with highlights of orange and yellow in the foreground, which contrasts the gray hill. Expressive brushstrokes can be seen and convey a sense of movement.

The works discussed here illustrate how Davis was concerned with the same classical properties and ideas Sloan was in his first year at Gloucester. They both were concerned with line, color, and form and painted panoramic views of Gloucester’s landscape without human presence. It was briefly discussed in this chapter how Davis’s works displayed similarities to painters from the Armory Show. It must not be forgotten as discussed in previous chapters how his 1915 works, *Rocks, Gloucester* (figure 49) exhibited Fauvist traits such as expressive, complementary, and brilliant colors and *Landscape with House, Gloucester* (figure 55) had affinities to the work of Van Gogh and Cézanne. *Landscape with House, Gloucester* reveals Davis’s interest in Van Gogh with his use of thick expressive brushstrokes, and Cézanne, since Davis arranged shapes and forms by using patches of color as they recede into the background.

As time progressed in Gloucester, Davis’s artwork became abstract while Sloan’s work never diverted from his Realist roots. Sloan recognized how Davis absorbed characteristics from masters he studied at the Armory Show. Sloan states, “Stuart was just beginning to assimilate ideas from the Nabis and Fauves. It was fascinating to see him re-assemble things he saw in nature sometimes finding a useful house or tree behind him to include in the picture. I did this myself but in a less original way.”

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The Making of an American Modernist Painter

Beginning in 1916, Davis started to flatten and emphasize shapes. His 1916 works, *Summer House* (figure 142), *Rocky Neck, Gloucester* (figure 143), and *A Cove, Gloucester Beach* (figure 144) all display this tendency. *Summer House* depicts a red house with an angular yellow church towering behind it. There is no modeling or shading to create depth, only flat areas of color. To further emphasize flatness, the sky consists of shapes interlocked with each other. A muted color palette, which recalls his Ashcan roots, is seen in all three paintings.

In *Rocky Neck, Gloucester*, houses are piled upon each other and our perspective begins to tilt. Recent photographs of Gloucester depict houses stacked upon each other on the slope of a hill (figures 145-146). The photographs do not show the exact perspective Davis painted, but it gives a general idea about the placement of houses and the terrain of Gloucester. In *Rocky Neck, Gloucester*, Davis painted houses using the same hue in different parts of the composition. This painting lacks the brilliance of color that is characteristic of his mature work. *A Cove, Gloucester Beach* further flattens our vantage point, since this painting has an aerial viewpoint. Figures stand on opposite sides of the cove and seemed placed rather than integrated into the landscape. The composition is comprised of organic shapes and Davis achieves texture by using different values of color in a single object as seen on the beach and his placement of brushstrokes.

Wilkin believes that instead of Davis pursuing Cubist tendencies, he was looking for subject matter, which looked like Cubist compositions. This can be seen in *Rocky Neck, Gloucester* because he scouted a location where houses are stacked on a hill and also in his

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1916 painting, Graveyard—Gloucester (figure 147). Graveyard—Gloucester combines elements of Fauvism and Cubism. Davis’s colors are bright and unrealistic. In order to heighten the intensity of color, Davis placed complementary colors such as yellow and purple together in Graveyard—Gloucester as he did in Rocks, Gloucester (figure 49).

Matisse used complementary colors in his 1905-1906 painting, The Joy of Life (figure 148). Red and green outline the central figures in the composition and is also used on the left side of the composition in the trees. Blue and orange can be seen in the trees as well and by the goats and the shepherd. His canvas reveals application of carefully constructed patches and lines of color. Matisse states, “One square centimeter of any blue is not as blue as a square meter of the same blue.” This realization allowed Matisse to focus on color and in The Joy of Life, though arranged in an academic fashion with nudes and nymphs flocking, was revolutionary in its use of flat planes of unmodulated pure color and thick contours of line. Davis’s Graveyard—Gloucester does not have the same intensity as in The Joy of Life but instead takes a somber subject matter of graveyards and changes it to an almost unrecognizable cheery place. In order to counteract this notion, Davis painted an eerie sky with a vortex pattern as well as using different values of green and yellow.

Hills notes how Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque inspired Graveyard—Gloucester, since Davis abandoned one-point perspective and stacked the rectangular shapes of tombstones. Gravestones, houses, and unrecognizable terrain are piled upon each other to create multiple vantage points. Davis used color and form to allow the viewer’s eye to proceed into the picture plane, since the tombstones and town (right hand side of the

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233 Ibid., 76.
composition) follow the same pattern and color. Underneath the sky, Davis may have represented the tower and steeple; Sloan had realistically painted in many of his Gloucester works (figures 113-116). A photograph (figure 149) taken from the Paint Factory in Gloucester, illustrates the shape of the tower and steeple from afar and how these two architectural elements may be the same objects in Davis’s painting. The compositional elements in this work foreshadow Davis’s attempt at Cubism, since the gravestones are stacked upon each other. In Cubist works, space is compressed and objects are flattened. Clement Greenberg, one of the major art critics of the twentieth-century, states there were two types of flatness in Analytical Cubism.\(^{235}\) One is a “‘depicted flatness’ by which the tilted planes shoved the fragmented objects closer and closer to the surface; and the ‘literal flatness’ of that surface itself.”\(^{236}\) In order for these two flatness to be distinguishable from one another, an illusionary element had to be incorporated into the painting.

An example Greenberg uses was Braque’s 1911 painting, The Portuguese (figure 150), since Braque painted stenciled letters and numbers at the top of the painting. These letters and numbers convey how the canvas is a flat object and Greenberg states how the stencils “push the little patches of shading and the barely tilted geometric shapes back into the field of depicted relief just ‘below’ that surface.”\(^{237}\) John Golding, critic and art historian, states Braque may have realized how Cubism was verging on abstraction and to affirm the

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\(^{235}\) In Analytical Cubism, the artist breaks down a single object such as a portrait, musical instruments, glasses, fruit, playing cards, etc. to depict all sides of it, so that the viewer can conceptually visualize an object from a composite of views.


\(^{237}\) Ibid.
realities of the movement, included illusionary elements into his art such as with the nail in his 1910 work, *Violin and Palette* (figure 151).\(^{238}\)

Davis’s * Graveyard—Gloucester* attempts flatness but does not achieve the same type of flatness known in Cubist works. In the period of Analytic Cubism, Picasso and Braque avoided color so they can focus on other issues such as form and space. Davis’s paintings in Gloucester are full of color. Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, the French art dealer and publisher who was among the early supporters of Cubism, believes that to solve the problem of shading in Analytical Cubist works, the artist would use “the shading tool against its own grain: creating the lowest possible relief so that depicted volumes would be far more reconcilable with the flat surface.”\(^{239}\) Picasso’s Analytical Cubist works feature tones of “pewter and silver with a few glints of copper” such as his 1910 canvas, *Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler* (figure 152) and Braque’s paintings reveal “ochers and umbers like a sepia-toned photograph” as seen in *The Portuguese* (figure 150).\(^{240}\) It will not be until the second phase of Cubism, Synthetic when color is used in their collages.

Davis’s most daring attempts at Cubism can be seen in his 1916 painting, *Sketch—Church Tower* (figure 153) and his 1917 work, *Boats Drying, Gloucester* (figure 154). In both works he simplified form, used broad bands of color, and outlined his objects. Agee states *Sketch—Church Tower* was painted from Banner Ledge in East Gloucester.\(^ {241}\) Davis juxtaposed shapes and line while using a muted color palette. Layers of shapes guide the

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\(^{240}\) Ibid., 106.

viewer’s eye to the background, which features a yellow church. This church may be the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church (figure 155) since it has the same shape but is abstracted. The color scheme of this work reflects early Cubist works by Picasso and Braque, since Davis used similar values of brown. Instead of using brown in the entire composition, Davis used bright colors to enhance various shapes, which Picasso and Braque would never have done as seen in their works discussed earlier (figures 150-152). Davis is experimenting with different ideas and does not paint or focus on one particular problem in painting.

*Boats Drying, Gloucester* features white crescent shapes stacked upon each other. This painting depicts rowboats overturned and drying. Red, orange, blue, and green squares could represent a wharf, since they are stacked upon each other. Davis has created patterns by using line and form. Thick contour brown lines contrast the small vertical lines seen painted on what would be the ground. The boats are arranged sporadically. The use of modeling is absent which ultimately makes the painting’s objects appear flat. Without the title, it would be hard to distinguish the subject matter of the work. This level of abstraction was a monumental accomplishment for Davis since he took real life objects and simplified their forms into basic shapes. This is a far cry from *Hillside with Tree* (figure 138), painted only two years earlier in Gloucester where the landscape is depicted realistically. Edith Halpert, a New York City art dealer purchased *Boats Drying, Gloucester* from Davis and was later told by him that, “This painting was the turning point of my work. For years, I have been wondering if it was still around somewhere. It may not look like much… This one is very personal to me…To me alone. It turned me around.”

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Following Boats Drying, Gloucester, he painted Landscape, Gloucester (figure 156) in 1917. Gloucester is unrecognizable because the landscape has been simplified into flat geometric forms. It is hard to distinguish recognizable landmarks of Gloucester but the black rectangular object with the protruding form may be a coal derrick and the rectangles of blue may represent the ocean. This work is abstract and demonstrates how Davis was experimenting with properties of Cubism in Gloucester, something Sloan never did. Even though Davis did not portray all sides of an object as in Analytical Cubism, he has however begun to simplify forms into geometric shapes and they appear flat.

Multiple Views

During Davis’s stay in Gloucester, he painted directly from nature, but then took a small sketchbook with him instead of hauling his equipment around. Davis states,

I brought drawings of different places and things into a single focus. The necessity to select and define the spatial limits of these separate drawings, in relation to the unity of the whole picture, developed an objective attitude towards size and shape relations. Having already achieved this objectivity to a degree in relation to color, the two ideas had now to be integrated and thought about simultaneously. The ‘abstract’ kick was on.243

Wilkin believes Davis’s “simultaneous pictures, seemed to test the conceptual, rather than the visual possibilities of Cubism, reinventing pictorial space as a series of vignettes set side by side and joined to make a complicated surface like a collage of perceptions.”244 Agee notes Davis’s simultaneous pictures reflected the current events of World War I (1914-1918). He states, the “unstable multiplicity of simultaneous, interpenetrating planes, was felt to reflect a society that had spun out of control and precipitated the widespread collapse of the old order

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during the war.”

This can be seen in his 1916 drawing, *Gloucester Terraces*, (figure 35) which led to his 1918 work, *Multiple Views* (figure 36).

*Gloucester Terraces* is composed of multiple drawings. This work of art features images from his 1916 painting, *Gloucester Backyard* (figure 157). In *Gloucester Backyard*, a woman places clothes on a line while a dog appears in the background. This scene can be seen on the left hand side of *Gloucester Terraces*. In this multi-image drawing, Davis changed the position of the woman and dog and subtracted and added elements. He divided the drawing into four sections and the women and the Haskell House act as the divider. This drawing is simplistic compared to his complex 1918 painting, *Multiple Views*.

Similar to *Gloucester Terraces*, *Multiple Views* is composed of numerous vignettes, which Davis constructed in a “S” shape and includes images from other paintings such as his 1917 paintings, *Garage No. 1* (figure 158) and *Garage No. 2* (figure 159). These two paintings are reminiscent of his Ashcan roots since they depict gritty subject matter. *Garage No. 1* can be seen on the left hand side of the composition. Davis did not strictly copy the painting to the collage. He changed physical characteristics of the car, the quantity of figures, and did not portray words on the gas pump sign. Davis did include letters from *Garage No. 2* into *Multiple Views* but cropped them.

We are only privileged to see half of the “Garage” sign above a red garage. By omitting these letters, it catches the attention of the viewer and permits us to look at other scenarios in the painting. Other identifiable images from Gloucester can be seen in different scenes scattered throughout *Multiple Views* such as the Haskell House, beaches, and coves. As Davis juxtaposes scenes together, he is ultimately fusing multiple vignettes, space and

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scale. He arranges figures and landscapes to coincide with each other to create a uniform whole.

**Davis’s Adaptation of Synthetic Cubism**

Wilkin terms Davis’s *Multiple Views*, as conceptual Cubism since it was “intellectually inventive” but still attained Realism.246 He pieced together images of “memories, notions of time, and simultaneity” into this painting instead of providing multiple views of a single object as Picasso and Braque had done in Analytical Cubism.247 Diane Kelder, a Davis scholar, states the artist’s *Multiple Views* “documents Davis’ search for a visual system that would accommodate Cubist simultaneity without forsaking representation.”248 Robert Rosenblum, the art historian, states, Synthetic Cubism is constructed of objects from “real components such as pasted paper, flat patches of color, and clearly outlined fragments.”249 Golding clarifies the difference between Analytical and Synthetic is Analytical Cubist compositions owed their final appearance to the “fragmentation of forms” and the “break-up of space” whereas in Synthetic Cubism, the composition can be built up with ready-made objects.250

Both phases of Cubism are conceptual. Golding states Picasso and Braque’s Cubist works relied on “visual models, their paintings were more the depictions of ideas about types or categories of objects than representations of individual examples.”251

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247 Ibid.
251 Ibid., 121.
papier collé aided Picasso and Braque in combining an abstract approach with a representational one. Golding explains how flat and colored forms remained abstract until given a “representational value by their incorporation into a picture.” Stuart Davis’s simultaneous works of art such as *Multiple Views* and *Gloucester Terraces* do not fit the definition of what Synthetic Cubism is. Davis adopted Cubist ideas and strived to create an authentic American Cubism.

*Untitled* (figure 160) is one of Stuart Davis’s early collages and was made in 1921. This collage combines different mediums. Davis drew the head, arms, and legs of the figure but the body is a floral and geometric decorative piece of paper. He added the letter “5” emerging from the side of the figure’s head and a decorative button is placed just above the legs. The figure has anonymity, as Davis did not draw facial features.

In the same year, Davis painted *Lucky Strike* (figure 161). This painting was made to look like a collage but is entirely painted with oil paint. The type of style Davis used in this work will dominate much of his mature art. Hills declares the imagery was an advertisement and commented on how the United States was becoming the world leader in advertising. Agee further states how Davis’s father, Edward was a sign painter and went into advertising after his newspaper career ended, which influenced Davis’s early tobacco paintings since they have a “feel of large signs in old stores.”

It was already discussed earlier about Davis’s use of words in his art such as his 1912 work, *Consumer Coal Company* (figure 33) and his 1917 work, *Garage No. 2* (figure 159). *Lucky Strike* continues this tradition as Davis placed the words “Lucky Strike” twice on the

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252 Ibid., 120.
canvas along with dates and full and partial words. The images in *Lucky Strike* overlap each other and Davis used geometric forms throughout the composition such as rectangles, squares, circles, and organic shapes. The flat areas of color do not have modeling and do not allude to three-dimensionality. Hills believes it had qualities of European Cubists collage works because of its “composition of overlaying flat planes” but also was American in the terms of its advertisement and commercial packaging layout.\textsuperscript{255}

A year later, Davis produced his 1922 work, *Schooner and Garage* (figure 162). This work does not reference the advertising industry but Gloucester. A schooner can be seen in the water. To suggest waves, Davis used horizontal lines. He included the word “garage,” which has appeared numerous times in his Gloucester oeuvre. Most of the work is flat and has overlapping forms. Davis did however use modeling by the word “garage,” which allows the rectangular form where the word is written, to be projected up from the background. This work is simple and unadorned and the motif of the schooner and body of water appears numerous times in his mature work.

Davis’s enthusiasm for developing his own authentic American Cubism continues in Gloucester, many years after Sloan left the Red Cottage in 1918. A work of art from his mature career can be seen in figure 163, his 1935 work, *Gas Pumps*, which was created less than ten years after Cubism ended in 1927 with the death of the artist, Juan Gris.\textsuperscript{256} In fact *Gas Pumps*, foreshadows images by twentieth-century artists Edward Hopper and Edward Ruscha. Davis’s work does not contained mixed media or is abstracted but plays with scale, space, and has recognizable imagery. Davis juxtaposes shapes against each other and incorporated words. He painted objects in the background, middle ground, and foreground as

if they were cutouts and placed them in various positions. This painting is reminiscent of Gloucester since there are gas pumps, a schooner, boats, a rope, seagulls, and a lighthouse. We have already seen a schooner and body of water where Davis used line to create waves in his earlier 1922 work, *Schooner and Garage*. *Gas Pumps* has come a long way in Davis’s oeuvre from Gloucester. No longer present are realistic, panoramic landscapes, Cubist-inspired paintings with multiple viewpoints, and works of art derived from influences of Matisse, Van Gogh, and Cézanne.

**Sloan and Davis in Gloucester—Same Scenery, Different Styles**

Davis attempted Cubism during the last couple years Sloan stayed in Gloucester. He was striving for abstraction while Sloan was painting portraits, genre scenes, and landscapes in a Realist style. The amount of work Davis produced was less than Sloan but more importantly, Davis was trying to develop his vision as a Modernist painter. After their last summer in Gloucester together, Sloan went to Santa Fe and Davis went to Tioga, Pennsylvania with his brother and mother. Sloan and Davis stayed friends after summering together for four years in Gloucester. In 1923, Sloan invited Davis to Santa Fe to paint the West and its unique features.  

John Sloan and Stuart Davis painted the same sites in Gloucester—the land, architecture, and water. Both had similar artistic experiences such as the teachings of Henri, the Armory Show, and the same European influences, yet both developed in different directions. In the previous chapter, Sloan’s 1916 painting, *Gloucester Harbor* (figure 96) was discussed. During the same year, Davis painted *Coal Derrick*, (figure 164) which

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portrays the same exact subject matter and viewpoint as Sloan’s. The comparison of these two paintings reveals the strikingly different styles of Sloan and Davis.

In both works of art, the viewer is looking at the back of the coal derrick and into the harbor. Sloan’s painting portrays atmospheric effects, is brightly colored, has shading and mass, and realistically represents the environment. Davis has flattened the coal derrick, houses, surrounding islands, and ships and changed the location of islands in order to make the composition look appeasing and orderly. Multiple houses were added on the left-hand side of Davis’s to create a bridge between the two parts of land. The color scheme of the houses is similar to the color palette of Davis’s *Rocky Neck, Gloucester* (figure 143) in which he has one white house and uses bright patches of yellow to draw the viewer’s attention. His saturated color palette recalls his Ashcan roots.

Both works have different moods, which stem from their divergent styles and color palettes. In Sloan’s, the viewer can participate in the work and the site appears attainable. Figures can be seen on the docks and there are multiple ships in the harbor. Viewers can visualize who these figures are, can question who is driving the boats, and what is their role in the harbor. Davis’s *Coal Derrick* appears cold and mechanical. There are no figures, the boats appear flat, and the color scheme appears bleak and uninteresting.

**Conclusion**

In Gloucester from 1915 through 1918, Davis experimented with what he had assimilated from the Armory Show. Brilliant colors, expressive brushstrokes, flattened objects, and paintings with multiple viewpoints can be seen in various works from Davis’s Gloucester oeuvre. He retained characteristics from his Ashcan roots such as a dark saturated color palette as seen in *Coal Derrick* (figure 164) and painted gritty subject matter
(Garage No. 1, figure 158). He painted a wealth of subject matter from gas pumps, landscapes, genre scenes, the harbor and its boats, and architecture. Even though he did not produce the same quantity as Sloan did, his works in Gloucester provide clues to how he constructed his paintings. Gloucester with its light and picturesque landscape had a profound effect on his art since he came back almost continually through 1934 and recycled motifs of Gloucester late in his career.

Stuart Davis’s legacy in Gloucester should not be limited to his art. He along with Charles Allan Winter, and seventy-three other artists, voted to form, Gloucester Society of Artists in 1922. They held their first exhibition in 1923 with 125 paintings from artists such as Milton Avery, Charles and Alice Winter, and Stuart Davis. The formation of the Gloucester Society of Artists had similarities to what Robert Henri wanted to achieve in 1908, when The Eight exhibited at Macbeth Gallery in New York; no jury to judge the works of art and the paintings should be hung alphabetically by last name, so no artist would have precedence over another. The average audience would not know about Davis’s activism in Gloucester and the importance of it. It is his artwork from this seaside city from which they will judge him as an artist. His paintings from Gloucester provide an intimate view of ideas he assimilated, beginning in New York with the teachings of Henri and the Ashcan School to European Modernists from the 1913 Armory Show. Artwork Stuart Davis produced in Gloucester enlightens and intrigues audiences as he strives to become an American Modernist.

259 Ibid.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: A LINEAGE OF AMERICAN PAINTERS
IN GLOUCESTER

John Sloan and Stuart Davis were not the first artists to paint in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and they will not be the last. They belong to a long lineage of artists and Sloan’s and Davis’s art from Gloucester joins that of Fitz Hugh Lane, Winslow Homer, Childe Hassam, and Maurice Brazil Prendergast, which preceded them. These artists were discussed in chapter one. Today, the Rocky Neck Art community flourishes. Artists in the nineteenth- and early twentieth century first came to Gloucester to paint its scenery during the summer months. Curtis states, “In 1973, a loose coalition of painters became incorporated, and created a not-for-profit organization dedicated to celebrating the artistic history and cultural heritage of Rocky Neck.”\(^{260}\) Today about 130 artists belong to the Rocky Neck Art Colony and work in traditional mediums of watercolor, photography, oil, pottery, and sculpture, but also the non-traditional medium of digital art in which the artist Otto Laske creates videos consisting of images, poetry, and music. Well-known artists such as Milton Avery, Marsden Hartley, and Edward Hopper painted in Gloucester during the early twentieth century and their art joins the artists who came before them.

**Milton Avery**

Milton Avery (1885-1965), an American Impressionist and Abstractionist, first came to Gloucester in 1920. In 1924, he met his wife of forty years, Sally Michel, a student at the

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\(^{260}\) Ibid., 155.
Art Students League in New York who painted in Gloucester for the summer. After their meeting, Avery moved to New York to be with her and they were married in 1926. Sally worked as an illustrator for the *New York Times Magazine* and financially supported Avery. Karl Emil Willers, the Director of Nassau County Museum of Art believes Sally’s income allowed Avery to “remain detached from the stylistic trends and artistic movements in American art,” since he did not have to compete with the New York art market. Avery’s work in Gloucester featured many of the same motifs we have seen in the art of the artists discussed in this thesis. He painted Gloucester’s coves, ships, beaches, rocks, houses, and portraits of his wife.

Art historian, Robert Hobbs believes Avery’s art “combined lush, high-keyed color with a frugal use of thin, transparent washes” and he took “a simple world and transformed it into a playful semiabstract construct.” Following the artists who preceded him, Avery was interested in the diversity of color Gloucester had to offer because of its light. Curtis states how he used broad palette knife strokes to “interpret nature in terms of color, shape, and reflected form, rather than simple mass.” Avery states, “I always take something out of my pictures, strip the design to essentials; the facts do not interest me so much as the essence of nature. I never have any rules to follow. I follow myself.” This statement can be clearly seen in his 1930’s work titled, *Gloucester Landscape* (figure 165). This painting,

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263 Ibid.
though seemingly simplistic, depicts a beach, body of water, and rocks with luminosity, which captivates the viewer’s attention. By looking closely at the painting, the viewer can see how Avery mixed a high-keyed color scale, since the values are light, but also used saturated values to emphasize the outline of the rocks and sea. Brushstrokes can be seen in the rocks and waves, which gives texture to the work. The tone of this painting is nostalgic. The various values of blue and green in the water invoke a calm feeling, and those colors are echoed in the sky. Avery captured a fleeting moment in Gloucester, which will forever be preserved in this work of art.

**Marsden Hartley**

Marsden Hartley (1877-1943) was a well-traveled man. He was born in Lewiston, Maine in 1877, trained in Cleveland (1898), in New York under William Merritt Chase (1899-1900), and at the National Academy of Design (1900-1903). He visited Germany and France in the beginning of the twentieth century and since he worked so frequently overseas, he was labeled as an expatriate. He returned to New England in the 1930’s and settled in Maine. In 1931, he visited Gloucester and painted in Dogtown, an area between Rockport and Gloucester. Hartley returned to Gloucester in 1934 and 1936. Ratcliff states, Dogtown “was a place of dirt roads, decrepit stone fences and the bizarre shapes of glacial boulders, some of them immense.” Hartley further states Dogtown “was so

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269 Ibid.
272 Ibid., 7.
original in its appearance as not be duplicated either in New England or anywhere else. Hartley follows a lineage of artists who came to Gloucester to paint its unique landscape and features.

Hartley called his paintings from Dogtown “a cross between Easter Island and Stonehenge.” His 1931 work, *Summer Outward Bound* (figure 166) has affinities to the Easter Island statues (figure 167) such as their massive form, angular noses and chins, and concave eyes. Hartley stacked the statues vertically, one on top of each other on the right side his painting. The statues look fragmented, as bushes obstruct our view of their faces. Green vibrant foliage acts as a separator between the statues. Even though the remains of these statues appear broken and discarded, the painting appears lively because of Hartley’s color choices. He used different values of the same color to highlight portions of his objects as seen in the road, the grass besides the road, and the trees in the background.

A fascination with nature stimulated Hartley to paint the world around him. Bruce Weber explains how reading the *Natural History of Selborne* by the eighteenth-century British naturalist, Gilbert White, inspired Hartley to paint and collect flora and fauna. In Gloucester, he painted shells and the sea life around him as seen in his 1943 work, *Shell and Sea Anemones, Gloucester* (figure 168). In this work of art, Hartley combined multiple vignettes. A boat tied to a pole can be seen in the upper left corner and a piece of architecture with the sea and rocks besides it, is depicted in the upper right. On a white cloth, a white shell and sea anemones are painted and is the main focus of this work, since it is larger and in the center of the composition. To differentiate between the cloth and shell,

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273 Ibid.
274 Ibid.
Hartley outlined the shape of the shell. He used different values of white to create texture and form, which allows the viewer to see multiple tiers of the shell. This work of art was painted in the last year of his life, 1943. Curtis states how Hartley did not return to Gloucester after 1936 because of health issues and died in 1943 of heart failure.\footnote{Judith A. Curtis, Rocky Neck Art Colony, 1850-1950 (Gloucester: Rocky Neck Art Colony, Inc., 2008), 153.} He did not paint the norm in Gloucester, but instead gave viewers a unique perspective. One of the greatest artists of the twentieth century joined Marsden Hartley in painting atypical aspects of Gloucester, the American Scene painter, Edward Hopper.

**Edward Hopper**

Edward Hopper (1882-1967) did paint views of Gloucester’s harbor, ships, lighthouses, and pastoral scenes, but a majority of his work is comprised of houses, factories, and the railroad, subjects that have not dominated much of the work discussed in this thesis. Hopper, a student of Robert Henri, came to Gloucester in 1912 with the artist, Leon Kroll.\footnote{Carol Troyen, “Hopper in Gloucester,” in Edward Hopper (Boston: MFA Publications, 2007), 57.} Hopper returned to paint in Gloucester in 1923, 1924, 1926, and 1928.\footnote{Judith A. Curtis, Rocky Neck Art Colony, 1850-1950 (Gloucester: Rocky Neck Art Colony, Inc., 2008), 154.} In 1923, Jo Nivison, an artist who later married Hopper in 1924, encouraged him to paint in watercolor because it was easier to transport than oils.\footnote{Carol Troyen, “Hopper in Gloucester,” in Edward Hopper (Boston: MFA Publications, 2007), 58.} Carol Troyen believes the medium challenged Hopper because he used it before in depicting figures, but had never painted outdoors with it.\footnote{Ibid.} The intense light of Gloucester inspired Hopper and Curtis thinks the Victorian
architecture did as well. She states, “the intense Gloucester light created strong shadows accentuating the mansard roofs with their towers and turrets, and how it lit up the gingerbread ornamentation on shady porches.” One of Edward Hopper’s most famous works of art from Gloucester is his 1923 watercolor titled, *Mansard Roof* (figure 169). This painting was bought by the Brooklyn Museum for only 100 dollars.

Hopper recalls how it was painted “in the residential district where the old sea captains had their houses. It interested me because of the variety of roofs and windows. It was a very windy day, as I remember it, and I sat out in the street.” This recollection of *Mansard Roof* clearly describes the painting. Troyen states the house was built by Captain Gardner K. Wonson in 1873. In the watercolor, two chimneys emerge from the roof. The yellow awnings flutter in the wind. Most of the windows shutters are open and each window on the second story has a pediment. There is an interplay between light and shadow as seen by the shadows cast from the trees and the house. Even though this house is a non-living organism, this painting depicts the house as full of life and character. Numerous textures, materials, and layers unify this house. *Mansard Roof* is visually stimulating and is one of many watercolors which feature houses Hopper painted in Gloucester.

*Prospect Street, Gloucester* (figure 170) from 1928, features a series of houses with the towers of Our Lady of Good Voyage in the distance. Figure 171 depicts the church and how the tower’s colors have changed from brown to its current state, a bright blue. As with

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282 Ibid.
Mansard Roof, Prospect Street, Gloucester also has an interplay between light and shadow. The sun hits the houses along the street, which cast shadows on various parts of the homes next to them. The street is secluded and Hopper does not portray any activity. This allows the viewer to focus on shape, color, and light in the work.

In 1928, Hopper painted Freight Cars, Gloucester (figure 172) in oil. Freight cars appear stopped on the railroad tracks in the middle ground. Houses and a church spire can be seen towering over the cars. Hopper plays with light as some of the houses are cast in shadow while some are not. The painting has a contrast between horizontal and vertical shapes. The spire, the chimneys, and the telephone pole are juxtaposed to the grass, freight cars, and houses. This painting lacks the whimsical nature we saw in Mansard Roof. Freight Cars, Gloucester has precision and is somber, which is due to the medium of the work. His watercolors capture a fleeting moment, whereas this oil painting conveys permanence. All of Hopper’s paintings discussed above portray ordinary objects in Gloucester. People pass by these sites everyday but do not realize the beauty they behold. Hopper’s paintings from Gloucester make the viewer aware of their surroundings and that they need to appreciate the world around them.

Conclusion

John Sloan and Stuart Davis’s time spent in Gloucester during 1915 through 1918 was used to experiment with new styles that emerged from the Armory Show. They embarked on a journey, living and discussing art in the Red Cottage. At the beginning of Davis’s stay in Gloucester, his art entailed similar characteristics to Sloan’s. He used an analogous color palette, style, and subject matter. This did not last long as Davis proceeded to experiment with Cubism in 1916 and his color palette receded back to his roots, the
Ashcan School. Sloan’s artwork from Gloucester is diverse and offers traditional views while exploring stylistic variations. Together, these artists presented different views of the same city, which has been inspiring the art community beginning in the nineteenth-century to the present day.

Both artists came from related backgrounds, yet their oeuvres are unique and can be considered as an expression of themselves. The lessons of their teacher, Robert Henri, compelled Sloan and Davis to be aware of their surroundings and to paint what was around them. Their portrayals in Gloucester follow this advice. Without the philosophies of Henri, it would be hard to foretell the progression of their art and lives. Henri changed the system of viewing art in New York when The Eight held an exhibition at Macbeth Galleries in 1908. There was no jury to dictate what art was worthy enough to be displayed; instead it was up to each individual artist. The National Academy of Design, which was made up of conservative members and implemented a jury system, could no longer decree what style or subject matter was proper.

**John Sloan and Stuart Davis’s Early Influences**

The formal training of these artists rested on the instruction of Robert Henri. He believed no artist should follow one particular school and that art is self-expression. This idea ultimately led to the Ashcan School, to which both Davis and Sloan belonged. During this period, their palettes were saturated, used thick brushstrokes, and painted a variety of subject matter, which ranged from parks, restaurants, street scenes, and depicted the lower and middle class. These artists painted the truth in what they saw and their work can be looked back upon, in order to understand the lives of New Yorkers in the early twentieth-century.
Sloan and Davis could not avoid stylistic influences in their art, as Henri instructed them so. Henri preferred and was inspired by numerous artists such as Diego Velázquez, Fran Hals, Francisco de Goya, and Honoré Daumier, and he brought them to the attention of his students. Artists imitate periods and styles that precede and occur during their own life spans. They learn daily from other colleagues through looking, talking, reading, and practicing new ideas and techniques. They may change and adapt styles to their own preference, which is what Davis did when he created his own American Cubist style (*Lucky Strike*, figure 161, 1921) after being inspired by Picasso.

Numerous factors led Davis and Sloan away from their teacher’s philosophies and stylistic characteristics of the Ashcan School. The color theory of Hardesty G. Maratta was one of these factors and was introduced by Robert Henri. Sloan began using the system after 1909 and it transformed his color palette completely. The combination of Maratta’s color theory and the brilliant light of Gloucester altered Sloan’s somber palette. Davis was uncertain about the Maratta color system. His work in Gloucester focused on stylistic color trends such as bright and expressive colors from Fauvism and occasionally returned to a saturated color palette of the Ashcan School.

The 1913 Armory Show is key to understanding the artwork Sloan and Davis produced in Gloucester. They were exposed to well known and never before seen works of art by masters of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism. After this exhibition their art endures an everlasting change due to the progressive works shown. Even though Sloan and Davis shared similar influences of Matisse, Van Gogh, and Cézanne, their artwork from Gloucester reveals the different techniques they each took and applied from these European Modernists.
Stuart Davis’s Influences from the 1913 Armory Show

Stuart Davis’s art from Gloucester reveals multiple influences from the Armory Show. He painted Fauvist landscapes (*Rocks, Gloucester*, figure 49) inspired by Matisse, which displayed an erratic use of color and simplified color and form. Davis painted thick impasto brushstrokes (*Road on the Moors—Gloucester*, figure 53), which provided texture and movement to his work inspired by Van Gogh. Cézanne used patches of color to create depth and layered forms on top of each other. This can be seen in Davis’s 1915 work, *Rocky Landscape* (figure 137), where he used patches of colors in the background to differentiate between terrains while creating depth.

One artist whose work was shown at the Armory Show and impacted Davis’s art was Pablo Picasso. Davis saw Picasso’s *Landscape with Two Trees* (figure 139, 1907-1908) and tried to emulate it with his 1915 painting, *Hillside Near Gloucester* (figure 136). In *Hillside Near Gloucester*, Davis stripped down his canvas so he could focus purely on line, color, and form. His painting is not as reductive as Picasso’s, but demonstrates how he began to flatten and emphasize shapes. Davis’s Gloucester paintings were full of color unlike Picasso’s and Braque’s Cubist works, which had a limited use of color. Experimenting with different properties of Cubism in Gloucester allowed Davis to take forms and simplify them into basic geometric shapes, as seen in his 1917 work, *Landscape, Gloucester* (figure 156). Davis strived to create his own authentic American Cubism, since he did not portray all sides of an object as in Analytical Cubism and he did not create collages as seen in Synthetic Cubism.

Karen Wilkin terms Davis’s *Multiple Views* (figure 36) as conceptual Cubism since he pieced together images, never forsaking Realism. He stuck to his Realist roots from his early days of painting in New York under the guidance of the Ashcan School and Robert
Henri. The landscape of Gloucester provided Davis with an outlet to experiment with Cubist properties because of its rocky terrain. Without the inspiration from Matisse, Van Gogh, Cézanne, and Picasso, it would be hard to imagine what Davis’s art would have looked like and the path he would have taken. Davis did not produce as many paintings as Sloan did in Gloucester, but the ideas Davis experimented with are significant.

**John Sloan’s Influences from the 1913 Armory Show**

John Sloan was not as bold as Stuart Davis in terms of the style he painted in at Gloucester. He too experimented with techniques he learned from Matisse, Van Gogh, and Cézanne. *Apple Tree and Rocks* (figure 57) from 1914 recalls the art of Van Gogh because of the movement created by thick impasto brushstrokes. Van Gogh and Sloan both looked to nature for inspiration and were concerned about how to convey nature using color, line, texture, and mass. *Path Through Rocks and Bushes* (figure 71) featured inspiration from Cézanne in terms of how Sloan arranged space, line, and color to create balance. Viewing Matisse’s work from the Armory Show motivated Sloan to paint figures again. He painted patterns and a coy expression on Sally Stanton’s face in *Brown Sally* (figure 62) similar to what Matisse did in his 1907 painting titled, *Red Madras Headdress* (figure 60), which also has patterning and a coy expression. He continued to paint his students, wife, and residents and children of Gloucester.

One of the most important ideas Sloan learned from the Armory Show was not a matter of style but dedication to painting everyday. European painters had a habit of constantly working, a practice Sloan could not do in New York because of job obligations. Gloucester provided Sloan with an outlet to produce more work than he ever had before. He learned subject matter was not as important as the style it was created in, which contradicted
the teachings of Robert Henri. It was in Gloucester where he practiced and experimented with color, line, perspective, and form. He changed physical properties of Gloucester to make his artwork visually appealing (*Twin Lights*—*Purple Rocks*, figure 122, 1915).

**John Sloan in Gloucester**

Sloan’s artwork in Gloucester featured an array of subject matter that focused on Gloucester’s landscape and light. The first year he painted in Gloucester (1914), he depicted landscapes devoid of figures. These works of art had vibrant colors, an interplay between light and shadow, and texture. The year Stuart Davis joined Sloan at the Red Cottage (1915), his work retreated back to subject matter he was comfortable with (genre scenes), his style still progressed, yet there was hesitation. *Fassett’s Jewels, Gloucester* (figure 77) had a nervous energy because of the bright colors used and the multiple directions of his brushstrokes. By 1916, there are fewer paintings representing the land without figures, instead Sloan depicts Gloucester’s fishing industry and his own income of teaching students.

By 1917, Sloan painted numerous genre scenes in Gloucester, which illustrated his growing concern for the ever-increasing artist population in this seaside city. He lost the pristine essence of Gloucester by portraying awkward figures and the machinery of Gloucester’s fishing economy. The last year of Sloan’s stay in Gloucester (1918), he portrayed few works of art devoid of human presence and also indoor portraits. It is fascinating to view Sloan’s transformation as an artist by viewing his early saturated New York paintings to his pristine brightly-colored Gloucester works. In respect to Sloan’s oeuvre, his transformation as an artist might not have been as dramatic as Davis’s, but for John Sloan, his time in Gloucester was a turning point in his art. He never parted from his
Realist roots and his artwork will be part of a long lineage of artists who painted in Gloucester.

**Stuart Davis in Gloucester**

The subject matter of Stuart Davis’s art in Gloucester ranged from pristine views of coves, boats, rolling hills, and beaches to the gritty; garages, graveyards, and gas pumps. His color palette ranged through both ends of the spectrum as well, from brightly colored to dark and saturated. With its light and picturesque landscape, Gloucester had a profound effect on Davis’s art, since he came back almost continually through 1934 and recycled motifs of Gloucester late in his career. He continued his evolution as a Modernist painter in Gloucester after visiting Provincetown (1913-1914). The art colony and landscape of Gloucester aided Davis with the materials he needed to become an American Modernist painter. A transformation can be seen in his art and was demonstrated in this thesis as Davis worked out ideas he assimilated in his early career as a painter. His Gloucester artwork is distinctive and is interesting to view because of the range of styles and subject matter.

By examining the oeuvres of Sloan and Davis, it is easy to discern the stylistic differences between these two painters. They had similar influences, such as the teachings of Robert Henri; the left-wing political magazine, *The Masses*; the Ashcan School; Maratta’s color system; European Modernist painters from the 1913 Armory Show; and the landscape of Gloucester. Even though they shared these similarities, the artwork produced was unique to each artist. Four paintings were discussed in this thesis to demonstrate this point. John Sloan’s 1914-1915 work, *Near Sunset, Gloucester* (figure 1) and his 1916 painting, *Gloucester Harbor* (figure 96) were contrasted to Stuart Davis’s 1915 work titled *Gloucester Environs* (figure 2), and his 1916 work of art, *Coal Derrick* (figure 164). In each set of
paintings, distinctive styles emerge. Sloan’s are brightly colored, focus on light, have an Impressionist quality, and are realistic. Davis’s art possesses flat objects, uses broad bands of color and is saturated, and space is confined and compressed. Art is a creative process, and the paintings Davis and Sloan produced are visual evidence of their personalities, thoughts, and recollections of Gloucester.

Concluding Thoughts

Visiting Gloucester in November of 2012 allowed me to witness the magnificent views Sloan and Davis painted. Beaches, lighthouses, the sea, houses, the harbor, and rock formations fill this coastal city. Even though modern amenities have been added such as Dunkin Donuts shops and McDonalds, it still felt like a small fishing and artist community. In Rocky Neck, artists advertised their art in their shops and studios. They were pleasant and welcoming to tourists.

This thesis demonstrated how painters gathered in Gloucester to paint its pristine views from the mid-nineteenth century to present day. A small sampling was provided in order to give the reader background information of painters who worked before and after Sloan and Davis were active there. Original research was conducted at the Delaware Art Museum and the Cape Ann Museum. I researched primary materials such as photographs and Sloan’s paintings which showed how he changed the size, color, and space of objects in order to create visually pleasing compositions. The Maratta color system has not been extensively discussed as I have done in this thesis since I was able to view a pamphlet written by Maratta and Sloan’s own color scales, diagrams, and tubes of Maratta’s paint. Both Sloan and Davis’s Gloucester works were examined in order to understand how even though they shared the same inspirations and acquaintances, their styles are unique to each of them. I
compared works of art that have never been discussed before such as Sloan’s 1916 painting, *Gloucester Harbor* (figure 96) and Davis’s 1916 work of art, *Coal Derrick* (figure 164) which depicted the same subject matter but are in different styles. By visiting Gloucester, I was able to both view the environment these two artists painted in and about and to distinguish landmarks of this seaside town in their work. My thesis contained scholarly material, primary research, and my own observations of Gloucester when I wrote about John Sloan and Stuart Davis in Gloucester from 1915-1918.

John Sloan and Stuart Davis embarked on a journey when they rented the Red Cottage and continued their friendship after they departed. One town inspired a plethora of artists from different backgrounds and time periods. By viewing the artwork produced in Gloucester via the assorted artists discussed in this thesis, multiple and changing perceptions of this city are gained. Various views, subject matter, techniques, and mediums alter the viewer’s opinion. Hopper’s Gloucester works have precision and are whimsical, Lane’s visions appear serene, Prendergast’s are festive, Sloan’s are enriched with color and light, and Davis’s paintings from Gloucester depict an alternative and sometimes unglamorous view. Studying and visiting Gloucester has allowed me to witness its many moods. John Sloan and Stuart Davis’s art from Gloucester will be preserved for generations to come. The great artists who have painted and will paint in Gloucester, Massachusetts, will join them in portraying this picturesque and charming seaside city.


The Fisheries of Gloucester from the First Catch by the English in 1623, to the Centennial Year, 1876. Gloucester: Procter Brothers, 1876.


Figure 1: John Sloan, *Near Sunset, Gloucester*, oil on canvas, 1914-1915.

Figure 2: Stuart Davis, *Gloucester Environ*, oil on canvas, 1915.
Figure 3: Map of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Figure 4: Cape Ann Map.
Figure 5: Map of the Rocky Neck Historic Art Trail.
Figure 6: Rocky Neck, Gloucester, MA, photographed by Harvey Barrison, July 30, 2011.

Figure 7: Rocky Neck, Gloucester, MA, photographed by Harvey Barrison, July 30, 2011.

Figure 8: Gloucester Harbor, Gloucester, MA, photographed by Kelly Suredam, November 2, 2012.
Figure 9: Wonson Cove, Gloucester, MA, photographed by Kelly Suredam, November 2, 2012.

Figure 10: Fitz Hugh Lane, *Gloucester Harbor at Sunset*, oil on canvas, 1858.

Figure 11: Winslow Homer, *Sunset at Gloucester*, watercolor, pencil on wove paper, 1880.
Figure 12: Winslow Homer, *Gloucester Sunset*, watercolor on paper, 1880.

Figure 13: Winslow Homer, *How Many Eggs?*, watercolor on paper, 1873.
Figure 14: Childe Hassam, *Gloucester Harbor*, oil on canvas, 1899.

Figure 15: Childe Hassam, *Gloucester Harbor*, oil on canvas, 1899.

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