



Catharine Carter Critcher: The Brinton Museum

The Brinton Museum in Big Horn, Wyoming, recently acquired four works by Catharine Carter Critcher, the Virginia-born painter who was the only female member of the Taos Society of Artists.

The four paintings were given to the museum by Toy D. Savage Jr., whose donation prompted an outpouring of gratitude from the museum and its curators. "We are exceedingly grateful to Mr. Toy D. Savage Jr. for donating four of her paintings from that [Taos] period to our permanent collection," says Kenneth L. Schuster, the museum's director and chief curator.

The donated works are *Child with Toys*, showing a young girl wrapped in a purple blanket seated next to an adobe fireplace as she holds a small doll; *Light Lightning*, a portrait of a male figure in a brightly colored blanket; *Portrait of Woman*, showing a female figure carrying a bundle on her shoulders; and *Study of Three Indian Women*, depicting a seated figure between two kneeling female figures hard at work in a domestic setting.

Critcher was elected into the Taos Society of Artists in 1924. Shortly after being accepted she sent a letter to Powell Minnigerode, director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. She wrote: "A letter just received from Mr. [Eanger Irving] Couse informs me that I have been unanimously elected to Active membership in the Taos Society of Artists. It's nice to be the first and only woman in it. I am feeling very good about it."

"Critcher first traveled to New Mexico in the early '20s, but unlike her fellow Taos Society of Artists members she never made Taos her permanent home. She would travel to New Mexico in the late spring and return to Washington in the fall," Schuster says. "It was in Taos, however, that her portraits of the Taos Indians and other Native inhabitants transcends mere portraiture and become perceptive in-depth studies of the individuals living in a culture alien to most Americans living outside of the geographic region."

Calling all Western Art museums! Have a recently acquired painting or sculpture? Email the details to editor@westernartcollector.com.



Catharine Carter Critcher (1868-1964), *Portrait of Woman*, oil, 29 x 31"



Catharine Carter Critcher (1868-1964), *Child with Toys*, oil, 35 x 29"
Images courtesy the Brinton Museum.



Catharine Carter Critcher (1868-1964), *Light Lightning*, oil, 23 x 21"