



Ethel V. Ashton (American, 1896 - 1975)

*Beach Scene*, ca. 1929

Pastel and pencil on paper

8 1/2 x 11 1/2 inches

#481

Ethel V. Ashton

Ethel Ashton was born in Philadelphia, PA in 1896. She began her art studies in 1917 at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (today the Moore College of Art and Design), where she was quickly recognized for her artistic talent. Ashton continued her studies at the Philadelphia School of Design as a postgraduate student, and in 1920 met and became friends with fellow artist Alice Neel. The two artists often worked together at the Graphic Sketch Club (today the Fleisher Art Memorial) where they attended free Sunday figure study classes. Ashton and Neel maintained a longtime friendship, exchanging ideas of art and painting. During the 1920s Ashton took frequent trips to Europe, where she painted in Paris, London and Rome. She maintained a studio in Philadelphia, and strove to depict the vibrant, everyday scenes of her urban life there. In Philadelphia, Ashton continued her studies at the prestigious Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, PA, frequently exhibiting at the Annual Exhibitions there as well.

During the 1930s Ashton began exhibiting her work nationally, where she participated in the juried yearly exhibitions at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Carnegie Institute and the Brooklyn Museum, among others. In 1935, she joined the Section of Painting and Sculpture, an artists program created by Franklin Roosevelt's 'New Deal' which was administered by the Department of the Treasury. The program granted artists commissions, awarded through competitions, for artwork to be installed in public buildings. In 1941, Ashton received a commission to paint a large Revolutionary War themed mural, titled "Defenders of Wyoming County, 1778", for the post office in Tunkhannock, PA. Continuing her career as an artist, from 1943 to 1957 Ashton likewise served as an active member on the board of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Fellowship, where she worked to promote public development of the arts. Ethel Ashton's work is in the permanent collections of the Pennsylvania Academy, Philadelphia, PA and the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC, among others. Ashton died in Philadelphia in 1975.