

Born in 1923, Richard Mayhew was introduced to art at an early age. His father, a housepainter, often brought young Mayhew along to assist, and thereby introduced him to paint. Taught to appreciate land by his African-American, Shinnecock and Cherokee family, he also developed a lifelong admiration for the aesthetics and characteristics of *nature lore*: "My paintings are based on improvisational internalized creative experience-- I paint the essence of nature, always seeking the unique spiritual mood of the landscape."

Living in Amityville, NY, where artists from around the world convene annually at the Hudson River School, Mayhew was regularly exposed to visiting artists, he took to watching and learning from them. Reflecting, he explains, "I was fascinated by the artists dipping their brushes into the paint like a magic wand and the beautiful images that came out on the end of it were amazing."

As a young man, Mayhew moved to Manhattan where he frequented some of the world's leading art museums and visited many prominent artists. He began studying anatomy and by 1945 worked as an illustrator for medical journals and children's books while attending art school at the Art Students League, Pratt Institute and Columbia University, where he earned a degree in art history. A talented vocalist and music lover, Mayhew performed in jazz and theatre groups during this time as well.

Mayhew held his first solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in 1955. Two years later, he held a second solo show at the Morris Gallery in Greenwich Village. Critics admired his work, particularly his use of color, light and form. Reviews compared Mayhew's work to that of Monet and Winslow Homer. After studying at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire in 1958, Mayhew was awarded a John Hay Whitney fellowship, which he used to study painting at the Academia in Florence, Italy. Remaining in Europe for three years, he traveled around the continent to view works of historic masters.

Especially drawn to the work of the Impressionists, Mayhew studied their use of color, texture, line, and tone, and also explored the dynamics of atmospheric perspective. He later received special permission to study in the archives of the Louvre, the Prado, and the Rijksmuseum. Mayhew enjoyed the arts culture in Europe, as there he maintained a clear identity as an artist.

In 1962, during the civil rights movement, Mayhew returned to the United States and felt a need to support the country socially and culturally. He joined fellow artists Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis, Hale Woodruff, among nine others, in *Spiral*, an art and socio-political think-tank. The term *Spiral* refers to an outward and upward movement--a direction the artists hoped they could help their own society to take following the civil rights movement.

Mayhew's work has been featured in several solo and group exhibitions in New York City, Los Angeles, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Clara. His paintings are represented in the collections of several museums, including the Whitney Museum, the National Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Los Angeles County

Museum of Art, and Minnesota Museum of Art. After a long teaching career that included positions at the Pratt Institute, the Art Students League, Smith College, and Hunter College, Mayhew retired as professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University. He moved to Santa Cruz, California, where he continues to paint and to exhibit, while preparing for his upcoming museum retrospective.

SELECTED MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

The Metropolitan Museum, NY
The Whitney Museum of American Art, NY
The Brooklyn Museum, NY
The Art Institute of Chicago, IL
The Smithsonian and The National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC
The Studio Museum, NY
The Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, CA
Afro-American Historical & Cultural Museum, PA
DeYoung Museum, CA
Hudson River Museum, NY