

NELLIE TAFT

Odyssey, A Lifelong Journey Through Art

Nellie Leaman Taft's death in December 2012 revealed the breadth of her creativity as an accomplished artist who produced a significant body of work throughout a fifty-year career in Cincinnati and Boston, Massachusetts. Taft's insatiable curiosity and bold experimentation compelled her to explore a diverse range of painting subjects from still life, interiors, landscape and figurative work to abstraction. *Odyssey* is a special retrospective exhibition celebrating Taft's epic adventure through the arts and featuring an array of paintings and works on paper selected from her prodigious creative output.

Organized by the Weston Art Gallery and curated by Denny Young, former curator of painting at the Cincinnati Art Museum, the exhibition features seventy-eight works of art that showcase the many avenues of artistic exploration in painting, drawing, and printmaking that Taft pursued during her lengthy career. The evolution of her work from representational to pure abstraction reveals a keen interest in and influence of Abstract Expressionism as well as the sheer joy of manipulating the artist materials she used as she continued to push her work in new directions.

It has been truly rewarding working these past few months with Denny Young to review Taft's estate and make the final selection from more than 265 artworks transported from Boston. Denny generously volunteered her time and lent considerable expertise in curating this exhibition. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Taft family for making Nellie's work available for this exhibition—especially to Woody Taft for organizing the work and arranging to ship it from Boston to his home in Cincinnati where he so graciously allowed Denny and me to organize the show. Especially gratifying has been seeing these works transformed and brought to life again as they were installed at the Weston.

Dennis Harrington
Director
Weston Art Gallery