



CALIFORNIA ART CLUB NEWSLETTER

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Anders Leonard Zorn (1860–1920): Stealing Secrets and Beauty

by Elaine Adams

BORN AS THE ILLEGITIMATE SON of a Bavarian beer maker and a Swedish farm girl, never having met his father, and raised as a peasant boy on his grandparents' farm, **Anders Leonard Zorn** managed to reach international prominence, financial success, and philanthropic heights.

CHILDHOOD

Zorn was born in a cowshed on February 18, 1860 in the village of Utmeland, outside the 13th-century parish town of Mora located in Sweden's central province of Dalarna (Swedish for "The Valleys"). Until the age of twelve Anders Zorn was chiefly raised by his maternal grandparents on the family's small farmstead, *Gruddgården*, in Yvraden in Mora. The topographical environment that encompassed Zorn's upbringing included Europe's largest meteor crater known as the Siljan Ring, as well as Lakes Siljan and Orsajon, the foothills of the Scandinavian mountain range, and numerous waterways, lake islands, and woodlands verdant with spruce, pine, aspen, alder, maple, and birch trees. These were the surroundings and simple folk life that would eventually materialize in Zorn's art.

Among the Nordic countries, Sweden's climate is the warmest with summer temperatures of approximately 65 degrees. However, the summers also produce the most rainfall and, from May to mid-July the skies are filled with twenty-four hours of daylight, a natural phenomenon in the Arctic Circle known as the "Midnight Sun." With these unusual agricultural conditions,

Sweden's annual growing season in the central valley is limited to roughly 150 days—forcing 19th-century farming families to find work elsewhere during off-season. Such was the case for **Grudd Anna Andersdotter (1838–1920)** who worked as a bottle washer at the recently opened **Von Düben's** brewery in the university town of Uppsala. Later, in 1890 Zorn painted *The Little Brewery* in honour of his mother.

In the spring of 1859, Grudd Anna met a Bavarian brewer from Reichenberg named **Johann Leonhard Zorn (1831–1872)**, and approximately nine months later, gave birth to their son, Anders. Leonhard Zorn died twelve years later in Helsinki, never having met

his son. In his memoirs, Zorn bluntly wrote, "It was of course considered the deepest disgrace in those days to have a child out of wedlock, and one had every reason to fear the worst for such an unfortunate.... I had no father. I was the fruit of an accident and a German brewer living in Finland was to blame for my life's origin." However, the surname of Zorn was legally given to the boy as well as a small inheritance of 3,000 kronor, which he received in 1874. When the inheritance ran out four years later, German brewers in Stockholm got together and raised funds to help the boy continue his schooling. In 1874 Grudd Anna married a local man from Mora, **Skeri Anders Andersson**. They



Midnight, 1891

Oil on canvas 27.2" × 40.6"

Collection of Zornsamlingarna, Mora, Sweden

had two daughters, **Skeri Karin (1874–1906)** and **Skeri Mejt (1881–1981)**.

Because the name, Anders, was considered a common peasant's name, and to help give the boy more social advantages, he was called "Leonard" until 1884 when he decided to go back to his birth name. Anders affectionately called his mother "Mona" (meaning "mother" in the Moramål dialect). He began his schooling at age ten at Morastrand, and then, two years later, he continued studying at a secondary grammar school 150 miles away in Enköping for three years.

Zorn's school grades were satisfactory; but, he excelled in his artistic ability and particularly enjoyed carving wooden horses, the traditional folk art of Dalarna known as "Dalecarlian horses" or "Dala horses." The Dala horse has its roots as a popular children's toy in the 1600s and is now a symbol of Sweden. It is typically depicted as a simple crude figure of a horse painted in "Falun red," a bright red pigment derived from the old copper mine in nearby Falun (Dalarna's capital). Undoubtedly, making Dala horses kept Anders amused as a boy. He wrote in his memoirs, "...in the evening I would borrow grandfather's knife to carve a two-legged horse in bark.... Sometimes I borrowed his carpenter's pencil to draw horses or figures on the back of a letter from my mother, the only paper we ever had."

THE ACADEMY

Besides horses, Zorn also carved human figures and had aspirations of becoming a sculptor. In September of 1875, at the age of fifteen, he entered the **Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts** in Stockholm where he chose to study drawing, sculpting, and painting in the uncommon medium of watercolour. Zorn's interest in the medium was heightened when in 1876 the Academy



Self-Portrait with Model, 1896
Oil on canvas 46.06" × 37"
Collection of National Museum, Stockholm

held a memorial exhibition of Swedish watercolourist **Egron Lundgren (1815–1875)**. Zorn visited the exhibition and was inspired by Lundgren's work—including the itinerant lifestyle he had led. Zorn spent the summer of 1876 painting watercolour scenes of country life in Mora.

Egron Lundgren had spent eight years, from 1841 to 1849, painting watercolours in Italy, followed by a trip to Spain where from 1849 to 1852 he immersed himself in the Spanish culture—painting images of brave bullfighters, lovely señoritas, and sultry flamenco dancers. Lundgren returned to England, where he received a commission from **Queen Victoria** to paint ceremonial pictures, and later was sent to accompany **Sir Colin Campbell's** relief expedition to Oudh, India where he documented the Mutiny of 1857, resulting in a series of 500 sketches.

In the spring of 1880 at the age of twenty Zorn showed his watercolour,

In Mourning (collection of the National Museum, Stockholm), at the Academy's student exhibition. The haunting portrait depicting a bereaved young girl with her demure face under a black veil garnered Zorn great attention, including glowing reviews from the influential art critic **Carl Rupert Nyblom (1831–1907)**, who subsequently commissioned Zorn to paint a portrait of his son. In addition, **King Oscar II of Sweden** tried to purchase *In Mourning*, however, unsuccessfully. Later, Zorn painted a similar work for the King. The attention contributed immensely to Zorn's immediate success.

Zorn's personality was big, bold and often brash—characteristics that increasingly manifested into his paintings by way of his lively, sweeping, and deliberate broad brushstrokes. He was developing a confident style, and with his recent triumph, Zorn was eager to start his career.

In January of 1881, after a disagreement with the Academy's director regarding the school's strict curriculum, Zorn decided to quit. His popularity among fellow students inspired others to follow suit.

During this time Zorn joined the *Svea Livgardes* (Swedish Life Guards), a regiment of the Swedish Army that was one of the world's oldest continuously serving military units. The select battalion force was established in 1521 with the main objective of protecting the royal family as well as the palace and capitol in Stockholm. His national pride and deep gratitude to his native Sweden would continue developing on many levels.

BUILDING A FUTURE

Zorn's distinctive style and virtuosity spread throughout Stockholm, and with his outgoing personality, he was a novelty and soon began charming affluent families as well as receiving portrait commissions from them. In the



In Mourning, 1880
Watercolour 16.5" × 12.2"
Collection of National Museum,
Stockholm

spring of 1881 Zorn was hired to paint a portrait of a boy named **Nils Geber**. When he met the boy's aunt, **Emma Lamm (1860–1942)**, who was babysitting Nils, Zorn fell instantly in love. Emma Lamm was from an upper-middle class Jewish family from Stockholm where her father, **Martin Oscar Lamm (1824–1878)** ran the **S.L. Lamm & Son Textile Company**. Furthermore, her sister, **Anna**, was married to the successful publisher **Hugo Geber**; her brother,



Egrom Lundgren (1815–1875)
Girl with Blue Wearing Scarves
Watercolour 10.8" × 9"
Private Collection

Herman, eventually became the First Vice-Speaker of the Second Chamber of the Swedish Parliament (The Riksdag); and the family's friends and business associates were among Sweden's top elite. Through Emma, Zorn had access to prospective patrons.

Although the Lamms appreciated the fine arts, they did not want Emma marrying a poor artist. Zorn would have to earn a respectable income and reputation before the family would



The Little Brewery, 1890
Oil on canvas 18.70" × 30.71"
Collection of National Museum, Stockholm



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FALL 2013

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accept him. On June 2, 1881 the couple became secretly engaged. It took an additional four years until Zorn earned enough money to be able to marry Emma.

TRAVELLING AND PAINTING

The coming four years were spent mostly in England and Spain, but during the summers Zorn was at his old homestead in Mora as well as in Stockholm's archipelago resort, Dalarö, where the Lamm family rented a

summerhouse. Surrounded by lakes and the Baltic Sea, he began focusing on the appearance of water and its movement—how its undulating surface reflected and refracted light. Zorn expressed, “What seems now to have particularly attracted me was the play of the water and the reflections, to really get the movement, put the ripples and everything in perspective and scientifically explain it all with meticulous sharpness.”

In August of 1881 Zorn moved to London where he continued painting

watercolours. In the fall, he and his friend, Swedish artist **Ernst Abraham Josephson (1851–1906)**, travelled together to Spain, initially staying in Madrid. An interesting side note is that Josephson, who contracted syphilis early in life, subsequently developed schizophrenia and was committed to a mental asylum in 1888 believing he was God incarnate. Josephson continued painting until his death. His later work, which can be described as tormented, influenced German Expressionist, **Emil Nolde (1867–1956)**, and several of today's Scandinavian figurative painters, including **Odd Nerdrum (1944–)**.

In a letter Zorn wrote to his future brother-in-law, **Hugo Geber**, he described his impression of Seville, “It is hot here, sunny, with nice girls and picturesque beggars, a paradise for painters.” Zorn spent six months painting in Spain, mostly in Seville and Cádiz where he particularly developed his painting skills. While in Cádiz he exhibited three of his Spanish watercolours, which garnered him high accolades including from the newspaper *El Comercio*. Soon he began receiving commissions from the Spanish aristocracy.

In March of 1882—and certainly with Lundgren's journeys in mind—Zorn travelled to Italy for the spring, then, to Paris where he met with Emma and her mother, and back to London by fall where he resided for three years until the spring of 1885. His goal was to glean skills from examples of 19th-century British watercolour paintings and to develop his own reputation as a sought-after artist.

To impress prospective clients, Zorn rented an expensive studio in the posh district of Mayfair at 42 Brook Street, but soon began running out of money and was forced to borrow funds and live on credit. His fortunes began to turn for the better, however, when he received a portrait commission from the Swedish diplomat, **Minister Henrik Akerman**. Immediately afterwards, he began receiving commission requests from members of the English upper class.

In 1884 Zorn returned to Spain with the prospect of painting a portrait of the **King of Spain**, which did not materialize, but resulted in gaining



In Alhambra Park, 1887
Watercolour 19.86" × 18.86"
Collection of Zornmuseet, Mora



Zorn and his Wife, 1890
Etching 12.52" × 8.39"
Collection of Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston



Isabella Stewart Gardner in Venice, 1894
Oil on canvas 35.43" × 25.79"
Collection of Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston

a commission to paint the nearly as significant **Duchess of Alba**. Zorn was now in pursued demand among the elite, and it was no longer necessary for him to put on any false pretence over his lack of upbringing. Emma convinced her fiancé to drop the loftier name of "Leonard" and to revert back to his common Christian name of "Anders." His reputation as an eminent artist was such that he felt secure enough to begin signing his name simply as "Zorn."

LEARNING TO ETCH

While in London Zorn became acquainted with the Swedish etcher **Axel Herman Häig (1835–1921)** from whom he learned techniques of carving copper plates to make prints. Zorn was a great admirer of **Rembrandt** and was inspired by his etchings and use of directional

parallel lines. With Zorn's ability to carve—stemming from his childhood interest in making wooden sculptures—and his use of the etching needle, he became a highly formidable etcher. In all, he produced 290 etchings, some that were based on his paintings while others were directly inspired works.

MARRIAGE

On October 16, 1885, with financial security on the rise, Anders Zorn and Emma Lamm were married in a civil ceremony. The newlyweds travelled through Eastern Europe on their way to Constantinople where they would ultimately spend their honeymoon. In Romania, Zorn received notice that he was awarded the Royal Order of Vasa for his service to art in Sweden—an impressive recognition for an artist

of only twenty-five years of age. In addition, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts awarded him with the Egron Lundgren Medallion for Watercolour.

Soon after the Zorns reached Constantinople Anders became seriously ill with typhoid fever. In his delirium, he reverted back to speaking in the Mora dialect, which persuaded Emma to learn the local vernacular, and which would later prove to be beneficial. After spending three months convalescing, Zorn was well enough to travel again.

The first years of their marriage were highly productive for Zorn's painting. Emma played an active role in managing her husband's career, including details regarding keeping track of patrons and publishers, organizing exhibitions, shipping, insurance, and occasionally serving as the artist's model. She also



Une Première, 1888

Gouache 29.9" × 22"

Collection of National Museum, Stockholm

Although this painting won a Gold Medal at the Exposition Universelle of 1889, Zorn remained dissatisfied with the work and later, possibly in 1894, tried to improve it. Ultimately he gave up and cut the painting into pieces. A fellow artist, Christian Eriksson, gathered the fragments, repaired the painting, and donated it to the National Museum in the mid-1910s.



Summer Evening, 1894

Oil on canvas 31.5" × 21.65"

Collection of Zornmuseet, Mora

provided him with critical analysis of his work as well as the encouragement he frequently needed. The following eleven years were mostly spent abroad, first in England, later in Paris, but they always returned to Sweden during the summers.

The Zorns travelled with English painter **Alice Miller** in 1887 to spend the fall/winter season in England's southwest coast's fishing village of St. Ives in Cornwall. The setting was picturesque and attracted a host of international painters. This was an artistic turning point in Zorn's work, as he became inspired by his fellow artists and began to paint in oils. In fact, it was American artist **Edward Simmons (1852–1931)** that is credited for showing Zorn how to set his palette, which was limited to black, white, and ochre. (Later, Zorn would add red to become the basis of his palette.) Emma informed her husband that she preferred his watercolour paintings, partly because they had a track history of selling, and partly because she didn't like washing his oil brushes.

In transitioning from watercolours to oils, Zorn focused on softening his hard edges to create the effect of atmosphere and light. His *Fisherman in St. Ives* was the second oil painting he had ever done. He decided to exhibit it in the 1888 Paris Salon and it was purchased by the French state, which encouraged him to paint more oils.

The Zorns settled in Paris, eventually at 71 Boulevard de Clichy in Montmartre, where they lived for the following eight years. They became friends with local artists, **Pierre-August Renoir (1841–1919)**, **Edgar Degas (1834–1917)**, and **Albert Besnard (1849–1934)**. Zorn's work gained him prominence among the Parisian art world, including at the **Paris World Fair** of 1889 where at just twenty-nine years of age, he was awarded the French Legion of Honour. Also that year, he was asked to paint his self-portrait for the portrait collection at the **Uffizi Gallery** in Florence.

NUDES IN NATURE

Zorn's love for Sweden's landscape and fascination with interpreting light and movement on water, as well as his outwardly robust appreciation for the female form, evolved into a series of plein air paintings depicting nude

Swedish women bathing in Stockholm's archipelago. Many of his models were supplied through advertisements he placed in local newspapers. Zorn purchased a sailboat, which he named "Mejt" (after his half-sister), and used it as his open-air studio and for transporting his nude models to different locations. These paintings can be viewed as natural and graceful in their gestures and surroundings; however, many can also be regarded as voyeuristic and overtly sensual—and they certainly managed to raise a few local eyebrows. One such wary observer was a family friend, artist **Robert Thegerström (1857–1919)**, who alluded to Zorn's scandalous behaviour by commenting that Zorn "sails out twice a day with his nude Miss from the inn."

Zorn's gouache, *Une Première*, was exhibited at the **Exposition Universelle** held in 1889 in Paris where it was awarded the Gold Medal. The recognition helped develop his stature as a plein air painter. The subject of nudes in nature was not new; however, the way that Zorn portrayed them was different. They were not seen as clichéd mythological nymphs posed in the woods, but rather, as healthy, ordinary Nordic women that were simply part of nature.

Commenting about his own work, Zorn boasted, "I never spent much time thinking about others' art. I felt that if I wanted to become something, then I had to go after nature with all my interest and energy, seek what I loved about it, and desire to steal its secret and beauty. I was entitled to become as great as anyone else, and in that branch of art so commanded by me, watercolour painting, I considered myself to have already surpassed all predecessors and contemporaries." (Published in *Société des Peintres-Graveurs: printmaking, 1889–1897*; transcribed by Lindsay Leard, Columbia University, 1992.)

ZORN IN AMERICA

Although his plein air paintings were garnering him local attention, it was primarily his skill as a portrait painter that gained Zorn international acclaim. His keen ability to depict the natural essence of his sitters was especially apparent in the relaxed portraits of

prominent cultural personalities. He insisted on painting his sitters in their own surroundings and not in a staged studio environment. From peasant stock, however, with aristocratic leanings, his work was simultaneously informal and refined. Emma's cousin **Carl Robert Lamm** described Zorn as "a hybrid between a gentleman and a farmer."

In 1893 the **Columbian World Fair** was being held in Chicago and Zorn was elected the Commissioner of the Swedish Art Exhibition. He travelled to the United States and stayed for nearly a year. This would be the first of seven trips to the U.S., making subsequent visits in 1896–1897, and 1898–1899, 1900–1901, 1903–1904, 1907, and 1911. It was at the World Fair that Zorn met his future great patron **Isabella Stewart Gardner**.

The story goes that when the eccentric art collector was at the fair she was interested in purchasing Zorn's *Omnibus*, an oil painting depicting an interior scene of a Parisian bus. While admiring the work, she asked, "Who is Zorn?" Zorn was standing right there and introduced himself, to which she remarked, "Oh, my! I have the feeling we'll either be enemies quite soon or very, very good friends forever." The following year the Zorns travelled to Venice as guests of the Gardners and stayed at their **Palazzo Barbaro**. At the palazzo Zorn painted his famous portrait of Isabella with her arms stretched out as she enters exuberantly into the salon after watching fireworks over the Grand Canal. The Zorns and Gardners became life-long friends, and Isabella opened many doors for the artist.

Zorn enjoyed the American lifestyle and felt at home in the U.S. where he was treated as an important celebrity. A great highlight of this time was in receiving commissions to paint portraits of three American presidents: **Grover Cleveland** and his wife (1899, National Portrait Gallery, Washington DC), **William Taft**, (1911, the White House), and an etching of **Theodore Roosevelt** in 1905. The tremendous recognition he received for painting presidential portraits resulted in Zorn receiving more than 100 American commissions, the majority of which are still privately owned.

In his memoirs Zorn wrote about his impression of America:

"I get on well in America and with Americans. Their frank, straightforward manner suits my nature. I've never really been able to stand our urban Europeans' ceremonious style and artificial customs. When I first came out of Dalarna, I quickly learned that everything I knew and valued was considered nothing, and that one should never tell the truth about things in polite society. . . . But the

only rules of conduct that were so severely impressed on me by my grandfather from my earliest childhood were not so tricky; faithfulness, being true to one's word, honesty, and punctuality, virtues I discovered were unnecessary in the cities of Europe. . . . Why was I more than other foreigners during [my first visit to America] closest to the elite of America and introduced in all the clubs? Everywhere I go, I ascribe this to my grandfather, the splendid



Midsummer Dance, 1897

Oil on canvas 55.12" × 38.58"

Collection of National Museum, Stockholm

old Mora peasant who raised me until I was twelve. ...Over there [in America], when they say 'He's all-right; all doors open to the foreigner, which Europeans cannot understand. Openness, honesty, straightforwardness, punctuality, these things are included in the testimonial 'He's all-right.' ”

Zorn was a “self-made” man—a quality respected by Americans. In February of 1904 Zorn was invited to a reception at **The White House** where he had the opportunity to closely study President Theodore Roosevelt for preparation of his etching of the President. In March Zorn made a trip westwards over the Rocky Mountains and Sierra Nevada. While in San Francisco he wrote a letter to Emma describing his trip out west as “nothing has made such an impression on me, grandiose and charming.” Zorn also made his way to Pasadena, California where he painted a portrait of the inventor, industrialist, and plumbing mogul, **Richard T. Crane** and his wife **Emily**.

SETTLING IN MORA AND CREATING A NATIONAL LEGACY

Zorn was always keenly aware of his brand and had a natural sense for attracting business, particularly among America's Gilded Age of entrepreneurs, but not so much in Sweden. Nevertheless, he was homesick and wanted to return to Mora. In 1896 they resettled in Mora where ten years earlier they had purchased land adjacent to Mora church. A cottage from Zorn's beloved grandfather's farm was moved to the location and they began enlarging and remodelling it—and naming it **Zorngården**. (It was completed in 1910.)

After living a cosmopolitan life, Emma had to become accustomed to country life. It was helpful that she had learned to speak the local dialect when her husband was ill with typhoid. She quickly grew to love the people of Mora and found her place in society by helping to preserve the local culture and traditions. Today, Emma Zorn is credited, among other achievements, as being instrumental in saving Sweden's *Hemslöjd* (handicraft) from obscurity.

The main part of Zorngården consists

of Zorn's home and a museum filled with his art and personal collections, but there are two other museums that also are part of the Zorn Collections. *Gammelgården* (“Old Farm”) is an open-air museum in the southern part of Mora, and *Gopsmor*, Zorn's wilderness studio built twelve miles away. Zorn's interest in preserving local craftsmanship combined with his boyhood pleasure of woodworking resulted in his dedication to protecting historic Viking-style timber construction. Beginning in 1904 the Zorns started acquiring timber buildings dating from the 13th to 18th centuries, including a 1237 cooking house, known to be Sweden's oldest preserved secular timber structure. In total, Gammelgården consists of more than forty buildings. Also in 1904 Zorn began constructing Gopsmor, where he could paint in peace—and perhaps take refuge from Emma who was not happy with the multitude of nude women parading about their home.

PRESERVING SWEDEN'S HERITAGE

As industrialization was threatening old-world ways, protecting Swedish traditions became a cause celebre with the Zorns. At the turn-of-the-20th-century the couple actively supported and personally funded several important causes. Emma Zorn founded a lecture society, a public library, and the **Mora Handicrafts Society**, which still exists and has a shop in central Mora where they sell local folk art, including Dala horses.

Although the Zorns never had children of their own, Anders Zorn understood the value of a secure childhood and education. He and Emma decided to provide opportunities to underprivileged children in Dalarna, and together, they built a home for orphans. In 1907 they also helped establish the **Mora Residential College** on land they purchased on the banks of Lake Siljan with the sole purpose of building a *folkhögskola* (people's college). At the college Zorn personally taught classes in drawing and Emma lectured on preserving local heritage. The couple also provided several generous scholarships at various learning institutions.

In addition to painting and sculpting, Anders Zorn also enjoyed folk music

and played the traditional *spilåpipa*, a flute instrument played among the pastoral farmers. To protect Sweden's rural culture from vanishing under the eventual pressures of modernization, in 1906 Zorn created a folk music competition expressly for the fiddle, goat horn and cow horn. The competition eventually began a revival for folk music and thereby protected it from anonymity. Today, the Zorn Badge is among the most prestigious awards a folk musician can win.

The Zorns' altruistic generosity extended to the **Swedish Academy** to which they donated a house in Stockholm's old town that contained the world's oldest restaurant, **Den Gyldene Freden** (“The Golden Peace”). Had it not been for the Zorns' cultural preservation efforts, the restaurant would have been closed in 1919. Today, “Freden,” as it is commonly referred to by locals, continues as a gathering place for Sweden's top artists and writers. Moreover, the house hosts a weekly dinner every Thursday since 1901 for members of the Swedish Academy who come together to nominate the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1914 Zorn's national support was further conveyed to the Swedish Army and Navy in the contribution of the military's first aircraft.

LAST DAYS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Zorn led an unhealthy lifestyle. He habitually smoked cigarettes, drank relentlessly, indulged in rich foods, caroused with young women, and kept a hectic schedule. His health began to decline suddenly, and while on a Baltic sailing trip, Zorn became seriously ill and taken home to Mora to undergo surgery, which he did not survive.

Anders Zorn passed away on August 22, 1920 at the age of sixty. His funeral was conducted by **The Most Reverend Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931)**, Archbishop of Uppsala and head of the Lutheran Church in Sweden and future recipient of the 1930 Nobel Peace Prize. Also in attendance at the funeral were representatives of the Swedish Royal Family and many celebrated personalities. Anders Zorn was buried at the cemetery in his beloved boyhood



William Howard Taft, 1911
Oil on canvas 46.38" × 35.13"
Collection of The White House



Self Portrait in Red, 1915
Oil on canvas 47.24" × 35.4"
Collection of Zornmuseet, Mora

village of Mora.

To honour the memory of her husband, Emma Zorn spent her remaining twenty-one years creating a museum, which opened to the public in 1939. She completed the existing collection by re-purchasing a number of paintings that they had sold in the past. She also continued the philanthropic work that she and her husband had begun together. Emma Zorn died on January 4, 1942.

At his death, Zorn was worth nearly 9 million dollars in today's equivalent value, all of which he left to the people of Sweden. His magnanimous character was generous and full of life—qualities

that exuded in his paintings. His genuine connection to the people of his time and their way of life transcends to any culture and in any era.

Zorn overcame social, cultural, and financial obstacles that could have otherwise discouraged his pursuits in life. He challenged himself and succeeded in reaching greater heights—including achieving access to kings, queens, and presidents. Even with the acceptance and accolades Zorn received from the most elite of society, he never lost touch with his rustic roots—and it's in his portrayal of humble people enjoying simple pleasures that we find ourselves indebted to the genius of Anders Zorn.

Notes:

The exhibition, Anders Zorn, Sweden's Master Painter, is on view at the Fine Arts Museums San Francisco – Legion of Honor from November 9 through February 2, 2014.

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Research sources for this article include: Anders Zorn, Sweden's Master Painter, by authors, Johan Cederlund, Hans Henrik Brummer, Pat Hedström, and James A. Ganz, published in 2013 by Skira Rizolli; The Artist Anders Zorn 1860–1920 by Birgitta Sanstrom, revised 2009 edition, published by The Zorn Museum, Mora; Zorn in America: A Swedish Impressionist of the Gilded Age by William & Willow Hagans, copyright 2007, published online by the Swedish-American Historical Society, in coordination with the American Swedish Institute.