



Laura Christensen

Selective Memory (after Grandma Moses), 2016

Vintage photographs, acrylic paint, cherry wood, velvet, and brass knobs

Opening Bid: \$2,000

Artist Statement

In creating a response to Moses' work, I chose to celebrate her painting but critique aspects of the Grandma Moses phenomenon. Studying her art, I came to appreciate how Moses captured the rolling farmlands and soft, old mountains of our region. I "see" her vistas all around us now. I enjoyed discovering her skill of transforming paint blobs and brushstrokes into little characters full of gesture, attitude and life. However, people's willingness to champion the white-washed utopias presented in her pictures disturbed me. What about death, abuse, disease, and war? What about civil rights?

People embraced Grandma Moses only shortly after women had received the right to vote and African Americans' rights remained unprotected. In 1945 we exploded the first atomic bombs. Of course, life could be unbearable with tragedy always in the foreground. But constantly tuning out suffering and difference is just as dangerous. Two of the images in my piece can slide in and out (feel free to gently pull on the brass knobs). The top one drops away the moment you let go. Viewing the central Moses-like image in context of the pullouts reveals a more inclusive perspective that challenges a shuttered nostalgia evoked by Moses' art.

My process echoed appropriation methods that Moses employed. In fact, I borrowed source material from Moses' own paintings. But my goals differed. My piece honors her work yet recognizes diversity and questions romanticized notions of the past.