
BOB HAGGART: PAINTINGS



Sordoni Art Gallery Wilkes College

Bob Haggart: Paintings

Sordoni Art Gallery
Wilkes College
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
March 11 through April 8, 1984

Front Cover Photo:
Days of Wine and Roses, 1983
Oil on board 12 x 16

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Acknowledgements

To the artist, Bob Haggart, and to his wife, Windy, we extend our gratitude for their enthusiastic help in organizing this exhibition. A great love is felt by these two people for all manifestations of the fine arts.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Sordoni III have expressed their own love for music and painting through commitment and support for this exhibition, for which we are also grateful.

Others who have lent their assistance to this program are: Jerome Campbell, Bob Wilber, Al Groh, and my father, Chadwick Hansen, who first explained "The Big Noise from Winnetka."

Judith H. Toole
Director

Introduction

The invitation to Bob Haggart for a Celebration of his Music and Art comes as a result of two happy circumstances. First, the artist is a world-class musician and accomplished painter; and, secondly, Wilkes College is dedicated, in spirit and facility, to presenting worthwhile, cultural experiences to its students and to the community at the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts and at the Sordoni Art Gallery.

In one major artist, then, and at one location in Wilkes-Barre, Bob Haggart and the administration of Wilkes College through both its Department of Music, Jerome Campbell, Chairman; and the Sordoni Art Gallery, Judith O'Toole, Director, could come together in a balanced program of music and art. From his own comments, students and community alike will learn

that Haggart uses the same creative impulses and sensitivities in creating arrangements, compositions and paintings. Through direct experiences, listeners and viewers can form their personal impressions of the message that is contained in each and every Haggart expression.

We are pleased to present this major talent in his sixth decade as a performer and to know that the college and the community will enjoy his music, his paintings and his friendship.

Andrew J. Sordoni III
Wilkes-Barre,
Pennsylvania
February, 1984

Some Reflections on Painting and Music

To me, there is a definite parallel between composing a piece of music and painting a still life. The play of light in figurative art is very similar to the play of counterpoint in music.

As one attempts to create these effects of light and shade, music and painting seem to go hand in hand.

In forming a still life, or in orchestrating a beautiful piece of music, there is an identical search for good balance, color, form, and space.

The end results seem to have a similarity as well. The finished painting will acquire a life of its own, living on, hopefully, to give pleasure to the viewer. The written arrangement or newly composed melody will lie dormant until it is performed by a group of musicians. Only in performance can it spring to life, bringing excitement and joy to the listener.

Whether putting notes on a sheet of score paper, or daubing a loaded brush on a canvas, its the same trip!

Recently, I visited the home of a friend who owns one of my early paintings. When I saw the painting, I got the same kick that I get when I hear one of my early arrangements.

When the Sarasota Jazz Festival asked me to bring some of my paintings to exhibit, my first reaction was to show things along musical lines. I have many small still life pictures which do suggest music to me. My initial thought was to show this relationship by using song titles to describe the paintings. This idea seemed to be provocative and often amusing and added another dimension to the still-life subjects which often have a very calming effect on the viewer. Sometime the titles get a laugh, which isn't all bad.

Bob Haggart

The Music and Paintings of Bob Haggart

At the turn of the century there was a great discussion among creative people about the inter-relationship of all the arts. Struggling to break free from the bonds of representation, painters and sculptors looked with envy to their counterparts in music. Here was a medium totally free from the concrete world of the object. The inherently abstract quality of a musical composition created a parallel to the world of reality rather than a dependency on that world, as in the visual arts, for images with which to convey their meaning.

The Russian modernist, Wassily Kandinsky, wrote about the link between music, literature, and the visual arts in his book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. As a child, Kandinsky had been equally fascinated by painting and by music. He used musical terms such as melodic and symphonic to describe his own paintings, which he hoped would, like music, speak to the soul of a subject rather than simply describe the outer image.

Similarly, Bob Haggart found himself torn between his two great loves, painting and music, when he had to choose a career. A student under Kimon Nicolaides at the Art Student's League since high school, Haggart nevertheless chose jazz. This decision was prompted by his first gainful employment as a bass player for a band touring the Bahamas.¹ Haggart never abandoned his painting, however, and throughout a busy and prominent career in music he has still devoted many hours to his other passion.

Haggart joined the Bob Crosby Big Band, led by a brother of Bing Crosby, in 1935 and was a member of the smaller inner circle called the Bobcats. It was during breaks in their program that Haggart began to compose on the piano. His first composition was later recorded by Bing Crosby under the title of "What's

New?" and has since become a hit song for Linda Ronstadt. Haggart is perhaps best known for his "Big Noise From Winnetka" in which he whistles and picks the strings of his bass while a drummer plays on the strings. Another of Haggart's originals is the well-known "South Rampart Street Parade."

Haggart has worked with many famous singers including Perry Como and Frank Sinatra. In 1968 Haggart and trumpeter Yank Lawson organized the World's Greatest Jazz Band which featured some of the legendary players in jazz.

Even as Haggart's reputation as a musician brought him public notice and fame, he continued, privately, to paint. Not only during his more quiet winters in San Miguel, Mexico, but also on the road and while at home in New York City, Haggart is always at work on a few paintings. Although he has experimented with a variety of techniques, such as the post-impressionist squares of color in *Provence* and the Cézanne inspired *Take Five*, Haggart has achieved a distinctive style marked by strong, well-structured compositions and a brilliant use of color.

The two art forms, music and painting, are further united when he titles his pictures after a musical composition. More easily adapted to still-life than to landscape, some titles include: *Take Five*, *Stealing Apples*, *Apple Honey*, *Horse's Tail Blues*, and *Melon Time in Dixie Land*. Not restricting himself to jazz tunes, Haggart also names his images after classical music — *Love for Three Oranges*, *Prokofiev*, and *Pop* — *Days of Wine and Roses* (by Henry Mancini).

Haggart's paintings have long been admired. His works are in numerous private collections in this country, Mexico, and Canada. However, the priorities of his musical career have not allowed him the time to

organize and exhibit his paintings. This exhibition is the first significant opportunity to view over forty of his works in one gallery.

Although Haggart's images are more realistic in nature than those of Kandisky, they are similarly interpretations of the visual world. Heightened color, unusual perspective and refined shapes draw the images away from a specific time and place and make them open to fresh examination and interpretation as in a piece of music.

Rather than music being a way to better understand painting, perhaps for Haggart, painting is a better way to understand music.

Judith H. O'Toole
Director

1. This and other biographical information was provided by an article by Mary Lee Hester for *The Mississippi Rag* (December 1983).

Checklist of the Exhibition

All dimensions in inches; height precedes width. All works for sale unless otherwise indicated.

The New York Paintings

1. *Variations on a VW Theme*, 1976
Oil on canvas, 30 x 40
2. *Roosevelt Island, East River*, 1968
Oil on canvas, 21 x 27
3. *New York Interior*, 1970
Oil on canvas, 24 x 34
Collection Mrs. Robert Haggart
4. *New York Interior, No. II*, 1970
Oil on canvas, 24 x 30
5. *East River, Queensboro Bridge*, 1972
Oil on canvas; 23 x 26
6. *East River Looking at Triboro*, 1972
Oil on canvas, 28 x 24
7. *Roosevelt Island*, 1969
Oil on canvas, 16 x 24
8. *Church on 42nd Street*, 1983
Oil on canvas, 16 x 20
9. *Sunday Morning on 43rd Street*, 1983
Oil on canvas, 16 x 12

The European Paintings

10. *Provence*, 1969
Oil on canvas, 24 x 36
11. *View of Montmartre, Rue de Bac*, 1967
Oil on canvas, 16 x 14
12. *Cité Moderne*, 1967
Oil on canvas, 25 x 20
13. *Clock Tower in Waiblingen, I*, 1982
Oil on canvas board, 10 x 8
14. *Clock Tower in Waiblingen, II*, 1982
Oil on canvas board, 10 x 8
15. *Clock Tower in Waiblingen, III*, 1982
Oil on canvas board, 10 x 8

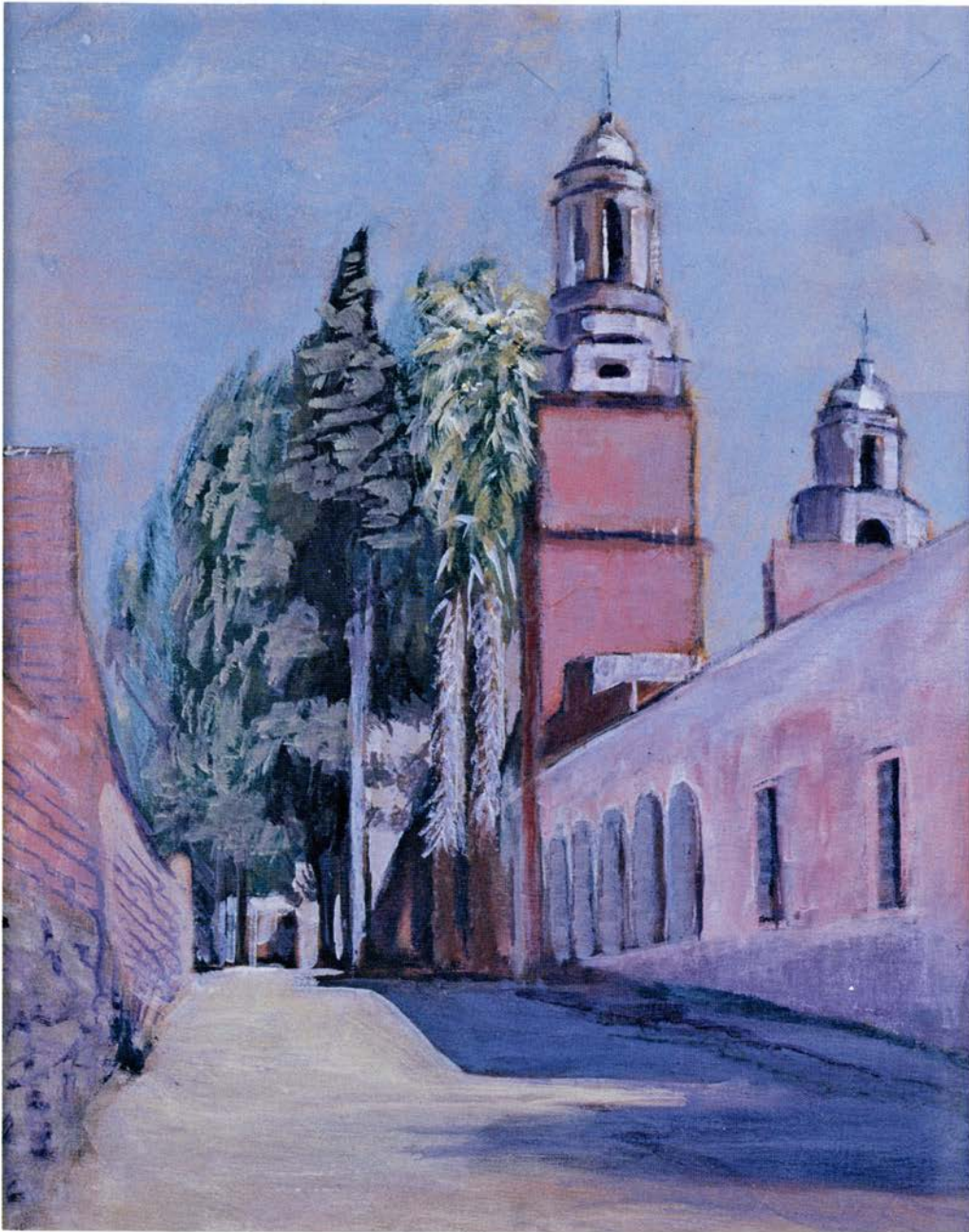
The Mexican Paintings

16. *Iglesia Atotonilco*, 1983
Acrylic on canvas, 22 x 18
17. *Duspues la Lluvia, (After the Rain)*, 1983
Oil on canvas, 20 x 24

18. *Las Casas de Atotonilco*, 1983
Oil on canvas, 16 x 20
19. *Capilla Vieja, Old Chapel*, 1983
Oil on canvas, 20 x 16
20. *Vista de la Aldea, (View from our house)*, 1981
Oil on canvas, 24 x 24
21. *Atardecer de San Miguel, (San Miguel Sunset)*, 1977
Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 22
22. *Templo de San Francisco*, 1977
Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 14
23. *Las Niñas Tristes*, 1982
Oil on canvas, 20 x 24
24. *Calle de San Miguel*, 1981
Oil on canvas, 20 x 16
25. *La Poerta de la Hacienda*, 1979
Oil on canvas, 16 x 20
26. *La Samaritana*, 1982
Oil on canvas, 24 x 16
27. *Parque Juarez (French Park)*, 1978-79
Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Henry Haegg

The Still-Lives

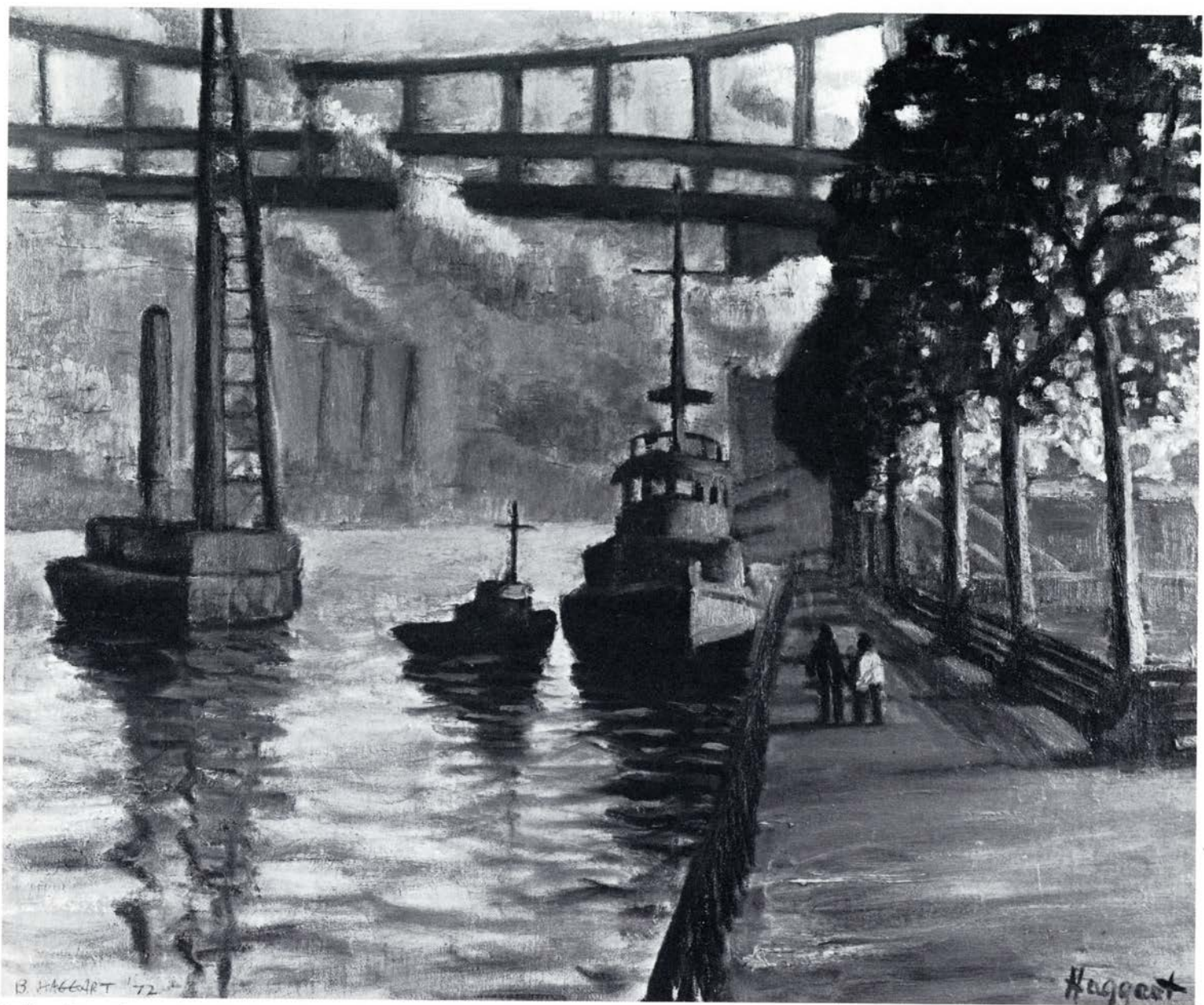
28. *Composition for Brass*, 1975
Oil on canvas, 29 x 26
29. *Tangerine*, 1982
Oil on canvas, 12 x 16
30. *Take Five*, 1975
Oil on canvas, 14 x 18
31. *The Old Master Painter*, 1981
Oil on canvas, 12 x 16
32. *Stealing Apples*, 1981
Oil on board, 8 x 10
33. *Strange Fruit*, 1982
Oil on canvas, 14 x 18
34. *Baby Face*, 1983
Oil on board, 14 x 18
35. *Rosey Apples*, 1983
Oil on board, 14 x 18
36. *Love for Three Oranges*,
Prokofiev, 1983
Oil on board, 14 x 18
37. *Red Onion Blues*, 1982
Oil on board, 14 x 18
38. *Tea for Two*, 1982
Oil on board, 14 x 18
39. *Apple Honey*, 1982
Oil on board, 12 x 16
40. *Days of Wine and Roses*, 1983
Oil on board, 12 x 16
41. *Life is Just a Bowl of Cherries*,
1983
Oil on board, 12 x 16
42. *A Tisket, A Tasket, A Little
Yellow Basket*, 1982
Oil on board, 16 x 20
43. *Melon Time in Dixie Land*, 1983
Oil on board, 16 x 20
44. *Red Grapes*, 1983
Oil on board, 14 x 18
45. *Cherry in my Lemon and Lime*,
1983
Oil on board, 14 x 18
46. *Horse's Tail Blues*, 1983
Oil on board, 14 x 18



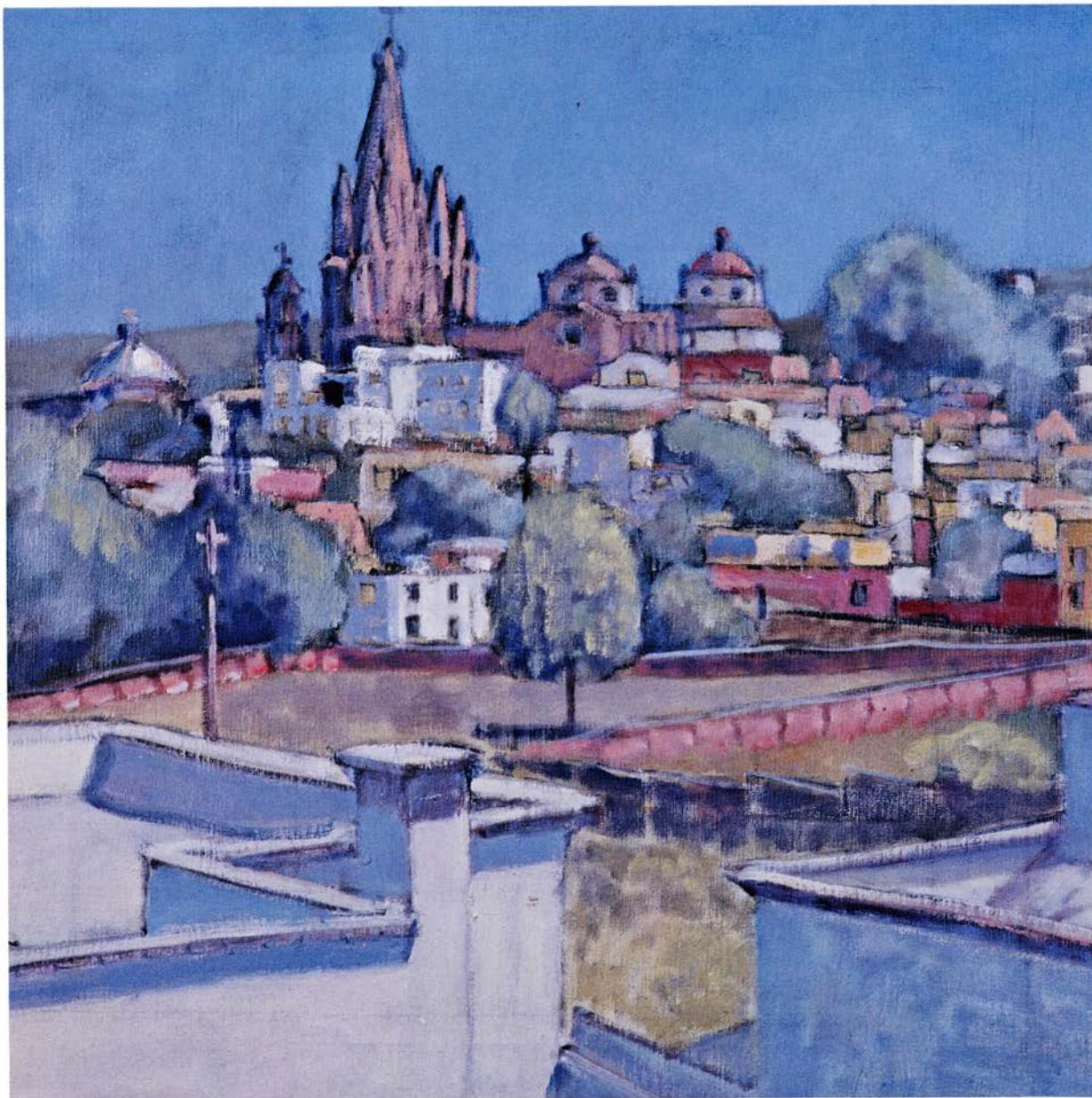
16. *Iglesia Atotonilco*, 1983
Acrylic on canvas, 22 x 18



3. *New York Interior*, 1970
Oil on canvas 24 x 34
Collection Mrs. Robert Haggart



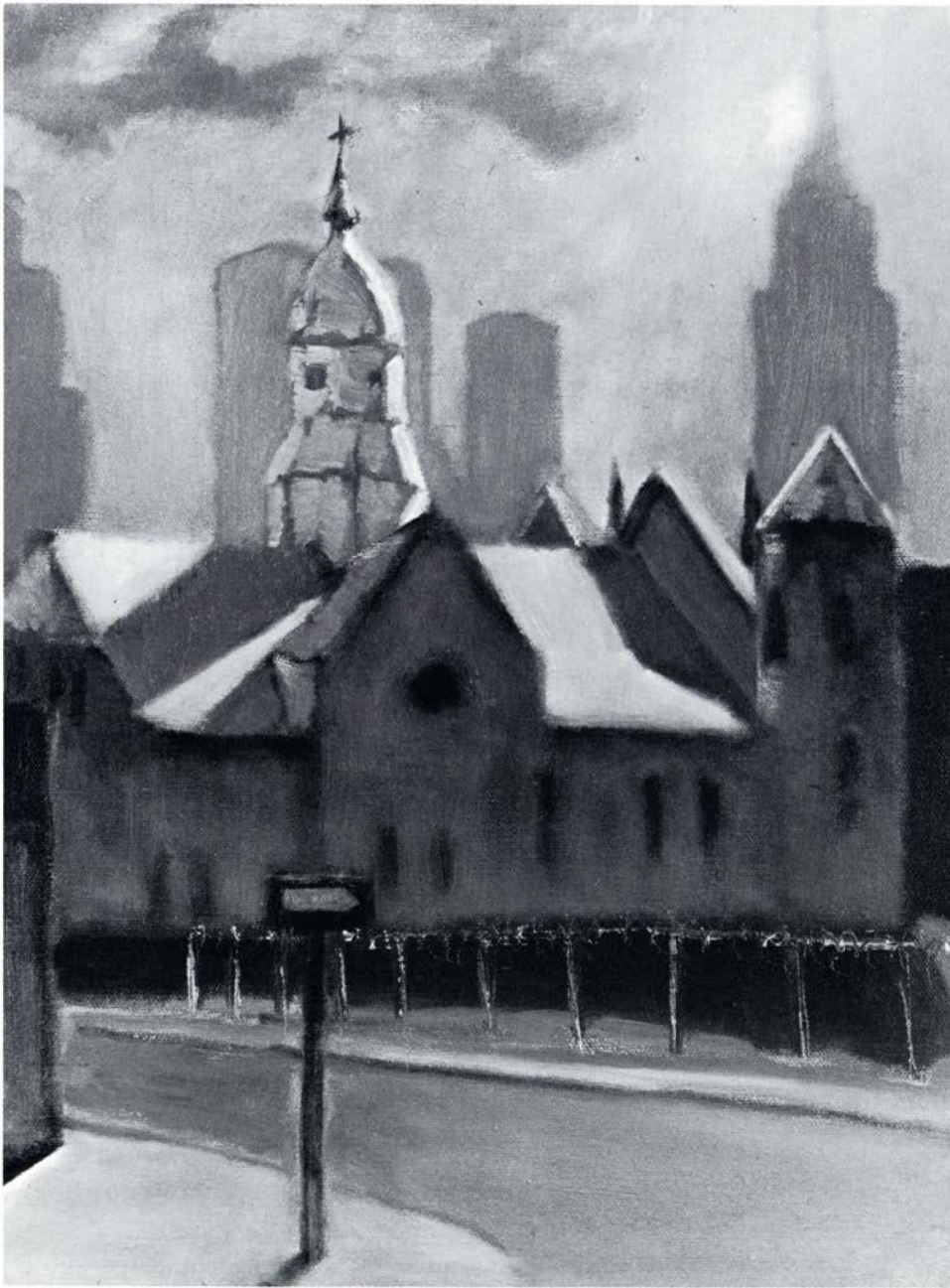
5. East River, Queensboro Bridge, 1972
Oil on canvas, 23 x 26



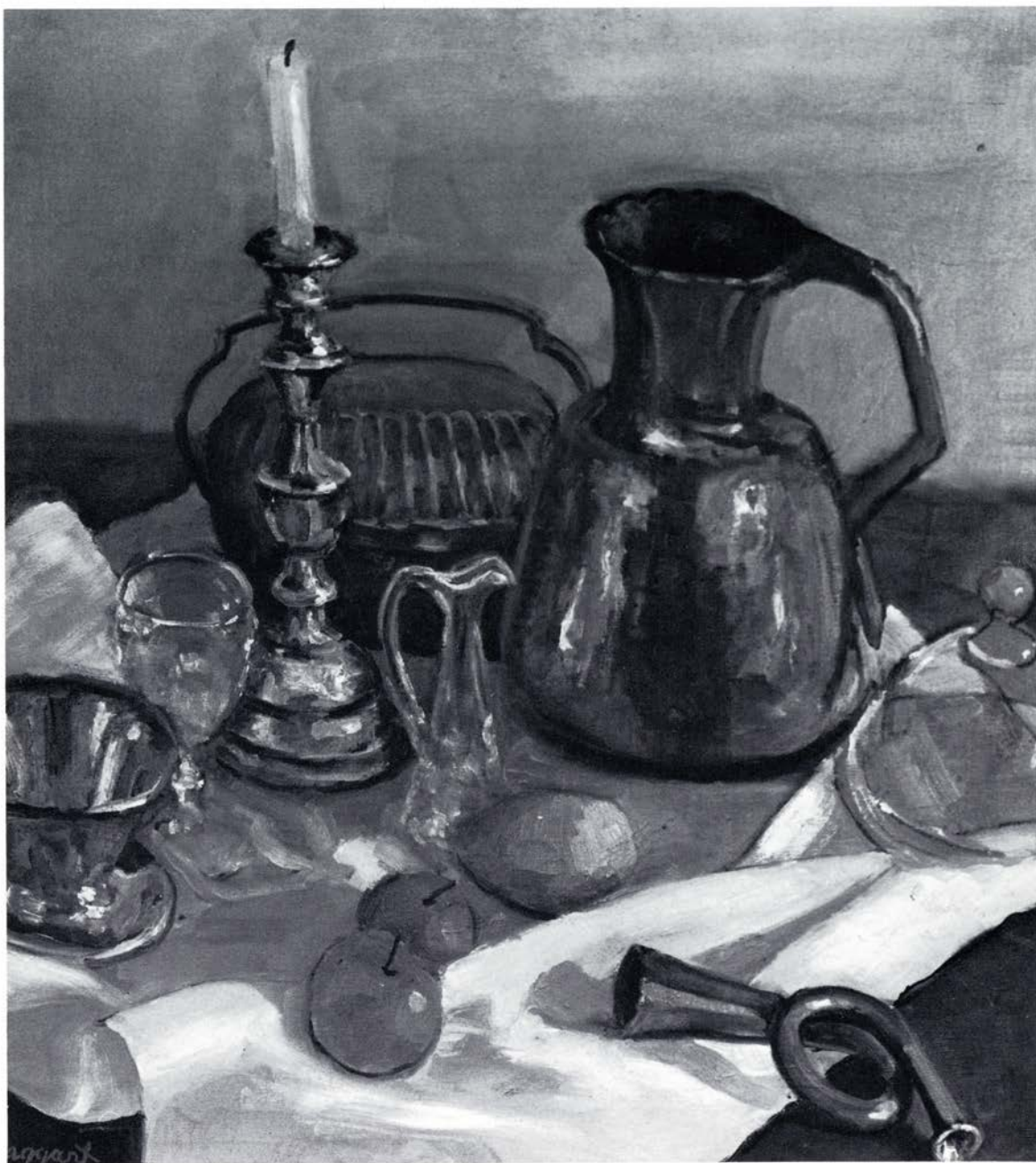
20. *Vista de la Aldea, (View from our house), 1981*
Oil on canvas, 24 x 24



35. *Rosey Apples*, 1983
Oil on board, 14 x 18



8. *Church on 42nd Street*, 1983
Oil on canvas, 16 x 20



28. *Composition for Brass*, 1975
Oil on canvas, 29 x 26



42. *A Tisket, A Tasket, A Little Yellow Basket*, 1982
Oil on board, 16 x 20

Sordoni Art Gallery

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Photographs by Allan Maxwell.



Sordoni Art Gallery
Wilkes College
150 South River Street
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18766
(717) 824-4651, Ext. 388

