

**Helen Lundeberg: Enigma of Reality**  
**September 17 – December 3, 2022**

Louis Stern Fine Arts is pleased to present a selection of early works by Helen Lundeberg (1908-1999), created between the 1930s and 1950s. Before dedicating herself fully to the hard-edge abstract approach that would characterize the majority of her career, Lundeberg's painterly works featured a recurring repertoire of inscrutable objects, cunning manipulation of perspective, and strategic subversion of expectation. Her spare landscapes and long shadows are reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico's metaphysical paintings, which Lundeberg had viewed and admired at the home of Walter and Louise Arensberg as a young art student. These delicate works conjure worlds that skim the peripheries of reality and recognition, inspiring intrigue, curiosity, and introspection.

Lundeberg's early works spring from the seed of Post-Surrealism, the artistic movement she co-founded with fellow artist and husband Lorser Feitelson. In a rejection of European Surrealism's focus on dreams, automatism, and tapping into the unconscious, Post-Surrealism's mysterious imagery was deliberately organized to induce guided contemplation of ideas within the conscious mind. Of particular interest to Lundeberg were the recurrent cycles of birth, life, and death, the permeable borders between psychological and physical space, and the ambiguities of perception and reality.

Included in the exhibition are a series of diminutive, dreamlike works executed in the years following Lundeberg's participation in the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project. After several years spent executing large scale, publicly palatable murals and artworks with themes not of her choosing, these intimate paintings represent the artist's return to her own work and personal concerns. Tiny, lonesome figures, daubed in the minutest of brushstrokes, huddle against the vast and hostile landscapes that threaten to engulf them. Enigmatic objects – a painter's easel and ribboned hat, a vase of fresh flowers, an unfinished novel – inhabit spaces that have been vacated by their human masters. The mystery of their absence, amplified by the psychic residue of their recently abandoned activities, creates a nostalgic space for quiet contemplation in the viewer.

Works by Helen Lundeberg are included in the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.; the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; the Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, California; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and numerous other public and private collections.

Louis Stern Fine Arts is the exclusive representative of the Estate of Helen Lundeberg.