PORTRAITS

LOREN MACIVER

Turning the Ordinary into the Extraordinary

By Jenni L. Schlossman

Loren MacIver (1909-98) was never marginalized by her contemporaries. She found early and continuing support from galleries, collectors, critics, and museums, even though she was never a member of any art movement. Her unique combination of modernist formal technique with representational subject matter appealed to a wide audience: even viewers with little knowledge of art could understand her paintings. MacIver's choice of themes from everyday life and personal experiences seems to have been influenced by the poetry of her husband, Lloyd Frankenberg (1907-75), and close friends E.E. Cummings, Elizabeth Bishop, and Marianne Moore.

In MacIver's paintings the commonplace is made remarkable, even beautiful. By giving her scenes a basis in reality, the artist made abstraction palatable. As she explained:

Quite simple things can lead to discovery. This is what I would like to do with painting: starting with simple things, to lead the eye by various manipulations of colors, objects and tensions toward a transformation and a reward.

My wish is to make something permanent out of the transitory, by means at once dramatic and colloquial. Certain moments have the gift of revealing the past and foretelling the future. It is these moments that I hope to catch.[1]

MacIver did capture those ephemeral moments in paint. Her art gained popular acceptance because it helped viewers realize that the details they overlooked could add meaning to their lives.

MacIver made palpable the Abstract Expressionist "look." Her style had little to do with Social Realism or the American scene painting popular at mid-century, and she seemed to have had no agenda to espouse. Nor was she a Surrealist, although James Thrall Soby and others associated her with that movement.[2] Her style, but not subject or theory, was similar to that of Paul Klee, an influence she acknowledged. Soby, who by 1944 was the Director of Paintings and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, thought highly of MacIver's paintings and bought several for his personal collection. He later commented:

[MacIver] seemed to find her subjects everywhere: everywhere, that is, except where traditional visual excitements might be expected to come into play.... She emphasized the unassertive phenomena of daily existence; she liked particularly disused objects and abandoned vestiges of ritualistic moments.... We can be certain only that [her subjects] will be something everyone else has overlooked.[3]

Born in New York City, the daughter of Charles Augustus Paul Newman, a school teacher, and Julia McIvers (whose name the artist took and modified), she showed an early interest in art. When she was ten years old, she was enrolled in Saturday classes at the Art Students League.[4] She claimed that this one year of classes comprised her only formal art instruction. (Biographical data found in the catalogue "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" of 1936 state she also attended the "life on probation" drawing class at the National Academy of Design in 1927;[5] however, because she took pride in having no formal training, these months at the National Academy have been left out of MacIver's "official" history.) Nevertheless, by age 17 she was serious about becoming a painter and was working on variations of her given name. According to the 1910 U.S. Census, her given name was "Mary,"[6] but she enrolled at the National Academy under the more sexually ambiguous name "Lawn McIvers."[7]

MacIver revealed little information about her life between the ages of ten and twenty, except that she spent time visiting artists' studios. It appears that she moved to Greenwich Village when she was about 19, lived on her own, and painted in the studios of artist friends. In 1929, at age 20, she married her high school classmate, the aspiring poet Lloyd Frankenberg, and they settled in Greenwich Village, living over a bakery.[8] The artist continued to use the variation of her mother's maiden name after marriage. Frankenberg, who became a successful poet and critic, was a constant support to MacIver throughout her career, promoting her work to the many intellectuals with whom he made contacts.

MacIver and Frankenberg married at the beginning of the Depression, a time when survival for artists was particularly difficult. They lived in a number of apartments around Greenwich Village and spent summers from 1932 to 1940, as well as the winters of 1932 and 1939, in a cabin they built on Cape Cod. MacIver began depicting the interiors of her homes even before moving into their permanent residence on Perry Street in 1942. Her interest in everyday subject matter was connected to her personal world view as well as to her awareness of the poetry of her friends, Cummings, Bishop, and Moore, who wrote about common objects and experiences as well as domestic scenes in a clear, understandable manner. Cummings also painted. MacIver admired his paintings because he "paints not in the fashion; he paints sunsets because he likes them. I do, too."[9]

It was Marianne Moore who first proposed the painter for membership in the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1956.[10] Moore's letter asserted:

Loren MacIver is a classicist of the imagination, an interpreter of what cannot be painted.... The essence of a subject is so precisely felt by her that nothing in her work is accidental; we are enabled to see what we would not have seen if she had not looked at it.[11]

MacIver first showed her work in group exhibitions, in Massachusetts at the Provincetown Art Association, from 1934 to 1937, in Manhattan at the Contemporary Arts Association Gallery in 1933 or 1934, and at the East River Gallery in 1936 and 1937.[12] Alfred H. Barr, Jr., then director of the Modern, bought two of these early paintings.[13] She was supported as an easel painter by

the Federal Art Project/Works Progress Admin-istration (FAP/WPA) periodically from the end of 1935 through the beginning of 1940.[14]

The catalogue for her first solo exhibition at the East River Gallery, in 1938, contained enthusiastic statements from important members of the art community, including Alfred Stieglitz: "This girl should be given a chance to continue to paint, if anybody should be given a chance to continue to paint."[15] Holger Cahill, director of the FAP/WPA, wrote of his enjoyment in seeing imagery that simplified scenes to create impressions of feelings rather than exact renderings: "In its fusion of the interests of the world of fact and the world of feeling, Miss MacIver's work is richly imaginative, and delightful in its sensitive, personalized expression."[16]

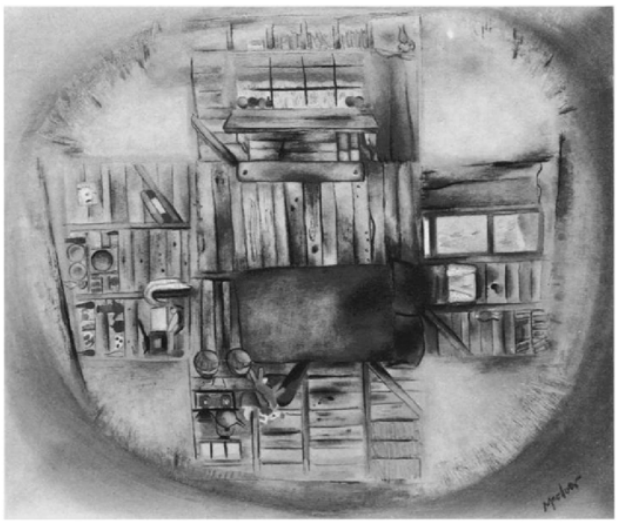

Fig. 1. Loren MacIver, *Shack* (1934), oil on canvas, 20⅛" x 24". Museum of Modern Art. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller.

The year 1940 marked the beginning of MacIver's artistic maturity, and it was at this point that she began to assimilate the influences of Klee. Pierre Matisse became her dealer—she was the only woman in his stable—and mounted her first solo exhibition at the end of that year.[17] It was probably Barr who had recommended her to Matisse,[18] who showed mostly European modernists. Evidently Matisse saw something attractive in MacIver's work, claiming: "She is a woman painter who paints like a woman—not a man. She does not belong to a school of art, but is an independent artist."[19] James Johnson Sweeney emphasized MacIver's independence from European abstraction and academic training in his catalogue essay for this show. He viewed her as a promising star, writing: "Throughout [her paintings] we come on formal organizations which impress us by their avoidance of conventional arrangements. We feel them essentially based on an intuitive approach rather than a rationalized one."[20]

MacIver's art continued to blossom during the 1940s. Frankenberg, who had served two years as a conscientious objector working in a mental hospital during the war, returned home in 1945. That year MacIver had her first solo museum exhibition, at the Baltimore Museum of Art, and in 1946 she was one of the "Fourteen Americans" exhibiting at the Modern, and her work was chosen for the catalogue cover. In 1947 and 1948 she was awarded mural commissions to decorate the first-class lounge of the S.S. Argentina luxury liner and the dining rooms of American Export Line ships. Her work appeared on the covers of *Fortune* magazine (December 30, 1944) and *Town and Country* (April 1947); on the cover and title page of the 1947 limited edition of Robert Frost's *Steeplebush*; and along with the short story "Malediction" by Tennessee Williams in the June 1945 *Town and Country*. Frankenberg also found success after the war. He became involved with the avant-garde publication *The Tiger's Eye*, and published his second book of poetry, *Pleasure Dome* (1949). Flush with their recent successes, they took their first European trip from July to October 1948. After spending a couple of weeks in Paris, they traveled through France and Italy, then to England, Ireland, and Scotland.[21] In Paris they visited with Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró.[22] MacIver was impressed with the color and light, which she depicted in paintings such as *Naples Aquarium* (1949), *Paris* (1949; inside front cover), and *Dublin and Environs* (1950).

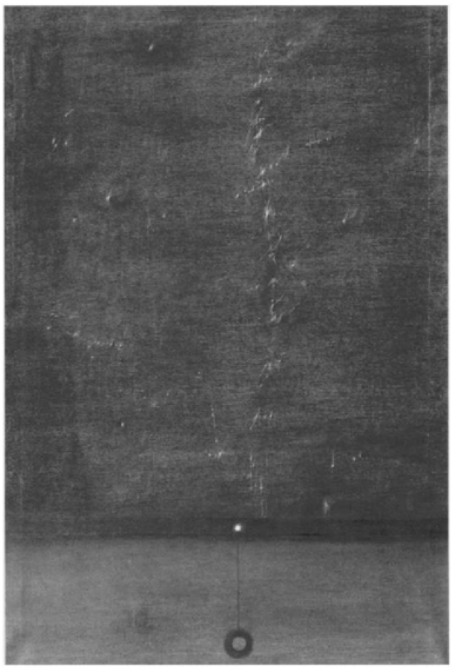

Fig. 2. Loren MacIver, *Window Shade* (1948), oil on canvas, 43" x 29". The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

After returning from a second European trip in 1953, she and Irene Rice Pereira were offered joint retrospectives at the Whitney Museum. Only one woman had previously been given a solo show there, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's 1943 memorial exhibition. At a time when women artists were clamoring for recognition, MacIver's support from major art venues—the Pierre Matisse Gallery, the Modern, the Whitney, the Baltimore Museum, and in 1958 the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.—was unprecedented. In 1962 she received the ultimate acclaim when the Modern sent 25 of her paintings to represent the United States in the American Pavilion at the XXXI Biennale in Venice.

MacIver and Frankenberg spent most of the sixties in Paris, where the countryside and special soft light of France inspired many European themes. Her style did not change, but she added landscapes to her oeuvre. Her European work was exhibited at the Matisse Gallery in 1966 and 1970, and at the Montclair Art Museum in 1975. By the seventies she had begun reinterpreting previous themes, and her work was no longer considered innovative. She showed little interest in the woman's art movement, perhaps because she had experienced little discrimination because of her gender.[23] She has, however, been well-documented in the many recent books on women artists. A quiet, self-effacing woman, in her later years she was amenable to visitors, although she was rarely forthcoming to those who wanted to interview her about her art. Friends and close acquaintances wrote much of the substantial literature about the artist.

In the five years following her husband's death in 1975, MacIver painted little and seldom exhibited her work. Her

Matisse Gallery exhibition in 1981 contained eight works from between 1962 and 1972, along with seventeen from 1980 and 1981. Her spirits restored, she had her first major retrospective on the West Coast, at the Newport Harbor Art Museum in 1983, and in 1989 she received the first Krasner-Pollock Foundation Award. During the last decade of her life, MacIver continued to paint themes already familiar to her. After the death of Pierre Matisse and the closing of his gallery in 1990, she was represented first by the Terry Dintenfass Gallery, and finally by the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, which hung its first exhibition of her work in 1998, only months before her death.

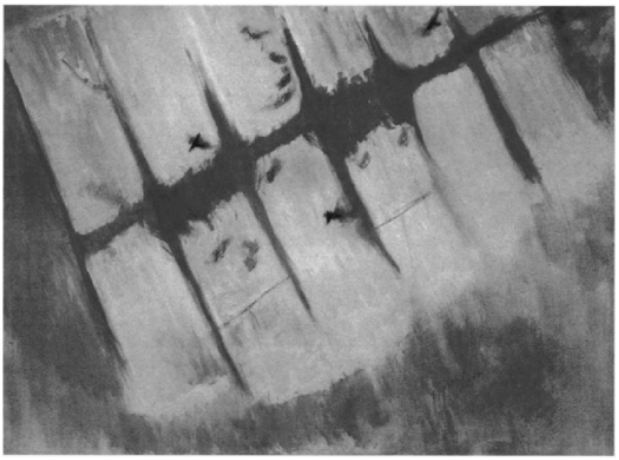

Fig. 3. Loren MacIver, *Skylight Storm* (1985), oil on canvas, 50" x 68". Courtesy of Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York.

MacIver's depictions of her homes show not only her living quarters, sometimes with an image of her husband, even their bed, but also their neighborhood. They demonstrate her delight in painting details of everyday life. The details from her private space are the closest she gets to self portraiture.

Two of MacIver's early images depict the couple's one-room cabin on the beach in North Truro on Cape Cod, near Provincetown, Massachusetts: *Winter Dunes* (1932) and *Shack* (1934; Fig. 1). Although the painting is vertical, the images in *Winter Dunes* are delicately sketched in horizontal bands and show the early influence of Klee. Frankenberg is portrayed as a lone stick figure strolling at the edge of the dunes, wearing a hat and coat, with a scarf blowing in the breeze. Painted in sunny colors, it depicts their home and environs from a bird's-eye view.

Shack reveals the intimacy of their life together, with a lovingly detailed description of the contents of their home, the views out the windows, and the immediate surroundings, although the couple is absent. This is an early example of MacIver's interest in rendering places that suggest human activity without a human presence. The four walls have been opened up to the sky and flattened, forming a cross. Enclosing the cross is a circular shape, representing the beach and dune grass; it is encircled by blue water, floating within an ambiguous, hazy grayness. The cross within a halo of the ocean creates a spiritual space. Her explanation for the painting was that each wall was so interesting that she opened up the room to show everything that was there.[24] There appears, however, to be deeper meaning to this iconic representation of their shack with its centrally placed bed. It is as though the bed is a sacred object (representing the sacrament of marriage) within a hallowed space surrounded by "ritual" objects such as towels (for daily cleansing), dishes (for daily nurturance), and books (for intellectual sustenance). For McIver *Shack* represented both a haven from society's ills and the security of her life with Frankenberg.

During the forties, MacIver used her unique vision to depict ordinary household objects in paintings such as *Fiery Rings* (1946), and *Window Shade* (1948; Fig. 2). In both images she presents close-up views of objects isolated from their context, with the shallow space creating works that at first glance appear abstract. *Fiery Rings*, for example, represents the stovetop in her Greenwich Village kitchen, seen from above and from the side. The unusual viewpoint creates a flat design revealing the gas burners, a tea kettle, and items on the top ledge of the stove. The well-worn quality of the objects on the stove and the lit burners add to the inviting atmosphere of the painting.

A painting such as *Window Shade* can define women's enclosed space, but it can also suggest transformation: the shade can be rolled up to reveal the world beyond. But MacIver does not claim such meanings, saying she only painted what she saw around her.[25] The shade here is pulled three-fourths of the way down, with a pull-ring hanging from a string. *Window Shade* has a romantic vastness about it, even while representing a simple, commonplace object. A realistic depiction appears at first as an abstraction: the surface of the window shade and canvas becomes interchangeable and as such anticipates Jasper Johns's later flag paintings. No spatial clues are needed because the shade has little depth. The paint is thinly applied, and the white patterns used to indicate the object's age suggest stars in a night sky, yet the time of day is ambiguous. Robert Frash describes the light as being from the sun, a street lamp, or moonlight.[26] Frankenberg wrote to Frash that it is a "dark shade scratched with age, the scratches making a constellation known only to shades. At the bottom is a piercing light like phosphorus sometimes found on beaches at night, or the small beam of a far away lighthouse."[27] Here again the artist makes you see more than just the commonplace objects and experiences that we take for granted. *Window Shade* relates to the Color-Field paintings of the time as well as to lyrical abstraction.

MacIver also explored the effects of weather on the lighting in her Greenwich Village studio. The large skylight appears in many paintings, including *Thunder* (1957) and *Skylight Storm* (1985; Fig. 3), painted almost 30 years apart. The outlines of the flat panes of glass are clearly defined, and within each are closely colored patterns, the first pinks and purples, the second pale blue-greens that camouflage the subject. Only the titles hint that the imagery is based in reality. In *L'Atelier en hiver* (1969; Pl. 1-1) MacIver depicted the interior of her Paris studio from a more conventional angle. The winter sun shines through a window onto a few objects in the corner, and the artist differentiates between the

Fig. 4. Loren MacIver, *Hopscotch* (1940), oil on canvas, 27" x 35⅞". Museum of Modern Art, New York.

tree, buildings, and sky outside. There is no such differentiation in the skylight paintings. In all three paintings the weather contributes to a muted, diffused light that accentuates mood over definition of form. She captures the serenity of a home filled with peace and creative productivity.

Although in previous centuries women were confined to the home and had little choice but to paint that which they knew best, during the 1970s many feminist artists chose to celebrate "women's work" in their art. MacIver drew inspiration from domestic themes before they became politically charged subjects.

Although MacIver painted a few portraits—of clowns and friends—her paintings of city streets and urban panoramas merely suggest a human presence, showing the consequences of human activity. She certainly was familiar with the urban imagery of Edward Hopper, Ben Shahn, Colleen Browning, and Isabel Bishop, but her city subjects differed from theirs. Her themes are closer to the poetic transcriptions of the urban scene written by her literary friends and had personal meanings for the artist.

As in her depictions of home, MacIver modified everyday details of city life by representing them close-up. Her urban details stand alone, iconlike, spanning the entire visual field with little or no indication of any surroundings. By taking the fragments out of their contexts, she universalizes them, allowing viewers to contemplate details from their own lives. Drawing attention to overlooked subjects monumentalizes them and makes them important.

Hopscotch (1940; Fig. 4), one of MacIver's best known paintings, represents the children's game as drawn on a sidewalk around Washington Square.[28] The viewer looks directly down at this two-dimensional design. The numbering system is unusual for the game of hopscotch, with the numbers ascending toward "Home" and getting higher as they make their way back down the right side of the diagram. She shows less than half of "Home," with the end of the word cut off by the edge of the canvas.

One theory suggests that the hopscotch diagram derives from ancient labyrinth myths.[29] Another proposes that its symbolism dates from Early Christian times: "The game might represent the journey of the human soul from earth to heaven,...in which the last, or uppermost, square is heaven."[30] Although not all hopscotch games have seven squares drawn in a basilican shape, the players' goal always is to reach "Home" and then return safely to the start by retracing their steps. MacIver's diagram in *Hopscotch* represents "Home" as a halfway point; having traversed 1 to 4, the player must turn around and depart from it in order to finish the journey (from 5 to 8). The players follow different paths to "Home" and back, ending in a different square from where they began. These players traverse unfamiliar territory, rest at "Home," and then continue on their journey.

MacIver painted a second hopscotch game, *The Sidewalk* (Addison Gallery of American Art), that year, which has a more conventional basilican shape. Although both renderings show a well-used game, unlike Philip Evergood's depiction of the same game—*Sunny Side of the Street* (1950)—there are no players in sight. MacIver's interpretation more closely relates to the last stanza of Frankenberg's poem "HEAVEN—HOME, for Sidewalk," which recreates the historical link between "home" and "heaven": "So many hops to 'home.'/So many hops back./in France,/so many hops to 'ciel.'"[31]

The diagram in *Hopscotch* does not cover the canvas. To its left, shapes and lines represent a blistered sidewalk. The cracks appear animated, like an ominous creature about to destroy the number two. The cracks threaten that number and could also threaten, on a symbolic level, the children who play the game. MacIver could be referring to the deaths of children during World War II, when she completed this painting, and to the loss of childhood innocence, represented by the chalk diagram that will be washed away in a rainstorm.

MacIver's *Red Votive Lights* (1943; Pl. 1-2), with its shimmering red hues and mesmerizing, flickering flames, goes beyond a mere replication of a simple subject, a common sight in Catholic churches. By monumentalizing the candles and filling the painting with lights from edge to edge, she has removed them from their context. The frontal representation creates a flat, abstract design, emphasizing the edge rather than the three-dimensionality of each glass candle-holder. The repetition of color, pattern, and shape throughout the entire panel, with no focal point, relates it to Abstract Expressionist ideas.

Painted during Frankenberg's wartime absence, *Red Votive Lights* can be interpreted as an antiwar image. Frankenberg, a pacifist, wrote in his application for conscientious objector status about his belief in the destructiveness of war because, among other things, war randomly kills the innocent and the use of force sets the stage for future wars.[32]

Red Votive Lights was painted during the height of U.S. involvement in World War II. Since a votive light is associated with a prayer or a petition to God, many votive lights may have been burning as prayers offered for soldiers. Too, the burning candle is a vanitas reference to death. The color red may refer to the blood of the dead and wounded; it is the liturgical color of "sacrifice, charity, zeal, and the Holy Spirit."[33] In Frankenberg's poem "SILENCE, to various Red, Blue, Green Votive Lights," the candles represent soldiers ordered to stand in formation, with only slight differences in posture and personality to show their individual inner lights and spirits burning:

Like clouds of souls praying in unison,
the lights flicker in their own smoke
in crowded embankments
some straight, some wayward, turned in on themselves,
each asking its own question,
all glowing together in ranks.[34]

In *Hopscotch* as well as in *Red Votive Lights* MacIver found spiritual meaning. Completed during the Second World War, both paintings seem to suggest a relationship between religion and war. MacIver, like her husband, appears to question how a group of people, most of whom worship the same God, are able to kill one another.

Puddle (1945; Pl. 1-3), was painted during the last year of the war. Baur describes the picture in romantic rather than formal terms: "In *Puddle*, the fallen twig of a Gingko tree lies like a frail skeleton in a rain pool cradled by the cracked city pavement."[35] Isolated within the rectangular boundary of the canvas, the puddle inches toward all the edges, a biomorphic form much as William Baziotes was using at the time. MacIver also was interested in the subject's formal possibilities. Viewed from above, the puddle creates an abstract, two-dimensional design that actually resembles a neuron, a nerve cell from the human brain.

MacIver continued to appropriate fragments of her surroundings to create playful designs. *Coal and Wood* (1954) restates a theme begun in 1949, in which piles of these heating materials left on a Paris street form intriguing patterns. MacIver recalled that "shops in Paris arrange coal in compotes like fruit or precious objects."[36] Here, placed in glowing blue bowls, the charcoal resembles fruit and crystals. The bundles of sticks become abstract, linear passages, contrasting with the organic shapes of the coal. MacIver, by her subtle handling of paint, has created poetic imagery from the mundane.

In *French Penny Candy* (1985) MacIver returns to her collage-like imagery of the 1930s. Floating pink and orange candy forms tempt the viewer. They radiate a childish delight in both their variety of shapes and bright colors.

Before 1950 MacIver's street scenes concentrated on ordinary details of city life. After she had completed the cruise ship murals and returned from her first European trip, her city scenes were no longer anecdotal. They became large and panoramic, their allover patterning and scale perhaps influenced by viewing Jackson Pollock's canvases at Betty Parsons Gallery (in January 1948 and January 1949). MacIver's European sketchbooks captured the essence of scenes that she later translated into canvases painted in her New York studio, such as *Paris* and *Venice*, both 1949.[37]

Paris depicts a view from above. Chimneys and rooftops, in a dizzying pattern interrupted by the flow of the Seine on the left, decrease in size and clarity as they recede toward the horizon line. An overall blue-gray mist opposes movement into space, tilts the picture plane forward, and almost flattens the work into a two-dimensional, abstract, Cubist-influenced pattern. MacIver reduces details to the point that they are recognizable yet can be seen as elements of line, color, and shape. There is no light in this city of lights. Rather, the artist has created an ambiance of quiet contemplation.

The subject of *New York* (1952; inside front cover) is realistic enough to be recognizable as a big city, but the painting is essentially concerned with line, color, and rhythm. The allover abstract patterning creates a unified composition that appears to be influenced by the look of Abstract Expressionist paintings. New York is presented as a city of light, with lighted apartment windows, neon signs, and traffic signals dotting the night. Although no figures are observed, MacIver conveys the sense of a vibrant humanity. Windows in each structure are differentiated, creating interesting patterns. Some of the lights are significantly brighter than others, resulting in the effect of constellations in the nighttime sky.

Bisecting the image is a horizontal line of neon signs representing, from left to right, a leaf, a key, eyeglasses, a lobster, a shoe, a hat, and a brioche. Baur sees these signs as continuing references to human activity without actually depicting figures, and says that the colored shapes in the lower left are from the Christopher Street subway in Greenwich Village.[38] Elizabeth Bishop describes such a vision in her poem "Love Lies Sleeping": "neon shapes/that float and swell and glare/down the gray avenue."[39]

New York was the centerpiece of MacIver's 1953 Whitney Museum retrospective. At the end of his catalogue essay Baur used the painting to sum up his interest in MacIver's career and how the strength of this work was built upon her earlier successes:

In its sensitive restraint and its cryptic symbols of absent humanity, New York has all MacIver's old poetic feeling; in its luminosity, its boldly unconventional design and its immense technical skill it is beyond anything she could have done before.

Looking at...New York...one is struck again by MacIver's absolute indifference to established styles and movements. Her persistent search for a visual beauty wedded inseparably to the mood of each changing subject continues to create unpredictable solutions as endlessly fresh and perceiving as her own poetic eye.[40]

Baur believed these works to be the artist's response to Abstract Expressionism and applauded her ability to use recognizable subjects to create "moods" rather than relying on nonobjective means. He saw her paintings as welcome alternatives to the gestural abstractions of the 1940s and 1950s—with imagery that the average viewer could easily understand.

A later expression of the presence of nature in the city is *New York Sunset* (1980, Pl. 1-4). Vibrant reds and pale blues and purples are framed by buildings and a roof topped with chimneys, reminiscent of earlier themes. The setting sun illuminates the Matisse-like leaves in the center of the painting. Likewise, *Paris Spring* (1985), as in her earlier *Printemps* (1964), shows her interest in how sunlight illuminates a grove of trees. Both paintings depict the countryside just outside of Paris.

Among women artists during the thirties, forties, and fifties, MacIver's renown was probably second only to that of Georgia O'Keeffe. Her paintings were written about and reproduced in publications ranging from monthly art and popular magazines to art history texts. Gender is rarely an issue in discussions of her work. She circumvented sexual bias by creating pleasing works, modern in idiom but not too difficult to understand. Her lack of formal training did not inhibit the power of her imagery nor prevent its appreciation by a diverse audience, which included influential sophisticates such as the director of the Museum of Modern Art and the art critic of *The New Yorker*. Her independence of style was as important as her subject matter.

Renewed interest in the personal and the everyday as acceptable subjects for art, and the scholarship of feminists, have once again brought MacIver's work to the fore. Her art is pleasing, even beautiful, and like the artist herself, it does not shout at the viewer. Although she was not identified specifically with any art movement nor closely associated with any artists of the turbulent mid-century, her art was not immune to their influences. Surrounded by poets, Loren MacIver, too, had a poetic vision, and her work was influenced more by this circle of friends than by any of the celebrated visual artists of her day.●

NOTES

Major archives on MacIver can be found at the Archives of American Art (AAA), Washington, D.C., the Whitney Museum of American Art (WMAA), and the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). The catalogues for her solo exhibitions also can be found in the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York City. The copyright of the images reproduced belongs to the Loren MacIver estate, courtesy Tibor de Nagy Gallery.

1. Quoted in Dorothy C. Miller, ed., *Fourteen Americans* (New York: MOMA, 1946), 28.

2. James Thrall Soby, *Romantic Painting in America* (New York: MOMA, 1943), 48.

3. James Thrall Soby, *Modern Art and the New Past* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma, 1957), 186.

4. John I. H. Baur, notes from a conversation with the artist, Sept. 15, 1952, WMAA papers, AAA, and in *Loren MacIver, I. Rice Pereira* (New York: WMAA, 1953), 7.

5. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., ed., *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* (New York: MOMA, 1936), 234.

6. Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910—Population.

7. Barbara Krulik, archivist at the National Academy of Design, New York City, to author, March 1992. The National Academy registration card shows "Lawn McIvers" living at 958 Prospect Avenue, born in New York City on Feb. 2, 1909. The date of application is Feb. 8, 1927, with the date of admission Feb. 14, 1927, for the first year, second term period.

8. According to Baur, "Lloyd Frankenberg told Dorothy Miller that he met Loren at high school. We have been told by several people that they have never been officially married but there is nothing to confirm it. They told RI [Rosalind Irvine] they were married in 1929"; Baur, *MacIver/Pereira*, 2, 8. MacIver told me, during an interview in New York City, Jan 27, 1990, that she met Frankenberg at a garden/costume party in New York City. MacIver was not specific about the date of this party, which was

probably while she was in high school.

9. Charles Norman, *E.E. Cummings: The Magic Maker* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), 241. He also mentions that MacIver "owns several examples of Cummings's work," 240-41.

10. Moore first nominated MacIver in 1956, the seconders were Karl Knaths and Lyonel Feininger; in 1957, the proposer was Isabel Bishop, the seconders Edwin Dickinson and Peter Blume; in 1958, Bishop proposed her again, with Dickinson and Moore seconding; in 1959, when MacIver was finally elected, Bishop proposed and Peggy Bacon and Louis Bouche seconded the nomination. Nancy Johnson, archivist/librarian, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, to author, Nov. 14, 1990.

11. See Marianne Moore to Felicia Geffen, Sept. 22, 1955, in the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia, Marianne Moore Archives.

12. Robyn S. Watson, Administrator, Provincetown Art Association and Museum, to author, Nov. 12, 1991; Baur, *MacIver/Pereira*, 12, mentions that Emily Francis hung works by MacIver in group shows at Contemporary Arts beginning in 1933 or 1934.

13. *Loren MacIver: Recent Paintings and Pastels* (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1987), n.p.

14. Robert Frash Papers regarding Loren MacIver, 1937-82, compiled for *Loren MacIver: Five Decades* (Newport Beach, Calif.: Newport Harbor Art Museum, 1983), AAA.

15. Alfred Stieglitz, in *MacIver* (New York: East River Gallery, 1938), n.p.

16. Holger Cahill, in ibid.

17. "Loren MacIver: Paintings" was shown at the Pierre Matisse Gallery, Nov. 26-Dec. 14, 1940.

18. Letter from William S. Lieberman, Metropolitan Museum of Art, to author, Jan. 29, 1992.

19. Quoted in Elaine H. Varian, *20/20* (New York: Grace Borgenicht Gallery/Terry Dintenfass Gallery, 1982), 11.

20. James Johnson Sweeney, in *Loren MacIver: Paintings* (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1940), n.p.

21. Baur, *MacIver/Pereira*, 25.

22. Gary Fountain and Peter Brazeau, *Remembering Elizabeth Bishop: An Oral Biography* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1994), 105.

23. She did not send her work to either of Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century all-women shows in 1943 and 1945, although she was invited to participate in the latter. Pereira showed in both. At a time when women were hungering for venues to show their work—even though perhaps uncomfortable with a gender-specific site—MacIver had no problem exhibiting and declined the Guggenheim offer.

24. MacIver, author interview, Jan. 27, 1990.

25. MacIver, author interview, Jan. 19, 1990.

26. Frash, *Five Decades*, 13.

27. Frankenberg to Frash, n.d., Frash papers, AAA.

28. MacIver, author interview, Jan. 27, 1990; also see Sandra Garbrecht, *Loren MacIver: The Painter and the Passing Stain of Circumstance* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 1987), 42: "MacIver says that the hopscotch scrawl in this painting grew out of one she came across one afternoon in Washington Square near her Greenwich Village home." Garbrecht asked MacIver where *Hopscotch* was painted, since there were previous references to the canvas being completed in Key West.

29. Alan Milberg, *Street Games* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 117.

30. Ibid.

31. Lloyd Frankenberg, *The Stain of Circumstance: Selected Poems* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University, 1974), 222.

32. Lloyd Frankenberg to Elizabeth Bishop, n.d. Vassar College library, Elizabeth Bishop archives. Frankenberg copied the Special Form for Conscientious Objectors that he had filed with the draft board in 1941, and sent it to Bishop.

33. Peter Klein, ed., *Catholic Source Book* (Dubuque, Iowa: Brown Publishing, 1990), 263.

34. Frankenberg, *Stain of Circumstance*, 219. MacIver also painted three versions of *Blue Votive Lights* (1944, 1945, and 1964) and two of *Green Votive Lights* (1946, 1980). "Blue is not an approved liturgical color; Marian Blue is used in honor of the Virgin Mary. Green is for hope, growth, increase, life, immortality or fidelity"; Klein, *Catholic Source Book*, 263. Baur wrote that MacIver told him "colors are symbolic: blue for the Virgin, green she thought was for saints who have died a natural death (not martyred), red the commonest but she was not sure what the color signified (perhaps martyred saints?)." Baur, Nov. 29, 1952, notes for MacIver/Pereira retrospective exhibition.

35. Baur, *MacIver/Pereira*, 22.

36. Baur, Nov. 29, 1952, notes for MacIver/Pereira retrospective.

37. Robert G. Edelman, "MacIver's Luminous Visions," *Art in America* (February 1994), 82, 117.

38. Baur, *MacIver/Pereira*, 33.

39. Elizabeth Bishop, *The Complete Poems, 1927-1949* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), 16.

40. Baur, *MacIver/Pereira*, 33.

Jenni L. Schlossman, an adjunct on the faculty of Art History and Women's Studies at the University of Nebraska, Omaha, wrote her dissertation on Loren MacIver for Rutgers University.

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LOREN MACIVER

Paris (1949), oil on canvas, 42" x 62". Metropolitan Museum of Art. George A. Hearn Fund, 1949.

New York (1952), oil on canvas, 45 1/4" x 74". The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

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Pl. 1-3. *Puddle* (1945), oil on canvas, 40" x 29".
Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College.

Pl. 1-1. *L'Atelier en hiver* (1969), oil on canvas, 47 1/2" x 32".
Courtesy Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York.

Pl. 1-2. *Red Votive Lights* (1943), oil on wood, 20 x 25 5/8".
Museum of Modern Art, New York. James Thrall Soby Fund.

Pl. 1-4 (left). *New York Sunset* (1980), oil on canvas, 68" x 57".
Courtesy Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York.

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