



## ART

# Murray Forbes—Painter, Author, Historian and Ambassador to the Arts in Central Europe, Russia, and Scotland

“Culture and art are able to unite even when politics divide.”

—Murray Forbes.



By Lee Daniels

“All passes;” wrote French poet Pierre Jules Théophile Gautier in his 1852 poem, *L’Art*, “art alone, enduring, stays to us; the bust outlasts the throne, the coin, Tiberius.

Gautier died in 1872 and so did not live to witness the succession of totalitarian regimes which swept Central Europe and Russia in the early 20th century, severely impacting artistic expression.

The demise of communist rule in eastern and central Europe in 1989, however, led to a resurgence in public appreciation and expression of art.

One visionary who visited central Europe a decade and a half earlier, became convinced not only that art had never really died in the region, but that suppression had dramatically failed. He believed its form was evolving faster than in traditional bastions of culture in Western European capitals.

In 1972, while he was completing his M.F.A. in Painting, Art History and Italian in Florence, Murray Forbes traveled to Poland, where he was very impressed with what he saw.

The following year, after graduating from the Schifanoia Graduate School of Fine Arts, Forbes applied



Murray Forbes, courtesy of Lesli Rothwell

for a post-graduate fellowship to study painting, art history and Polish at the Krakow Academy of Fine Art. Though his grant was rejected at first, he went to Poland nonetheless, persevered, was largely reinstated and won a second scholarship the following year.

And that, as the expression goes, was history for Forbes. Since then, while pursuing his career as a painter, exhibiting in Boston and on television, he has dedicated himself to helping promote art and culture through 20th-century photography of countries like Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, and Scotland, which often have important historical ties as well as recent connections in the 20th century. In the ensuing years, these countries, including Scotland, have witnessed firsthand the sea change that has taken place

not only in art and culture in the region, but in society.

“By 1980, I was rather saddened and surprised that people in the U.S. apparently knew so little of Polish, Czech, and Slovakian culture, so I decided to go back and see if I could bring back a large clump of visual, cultural, and historical reality in photographic form. I spent the entire last decade and beyond seeking to increase awareness of the region and its peoples,” said Forbes in a recent interview.

Three years later, Forbes formed the Navigator Foundation, with the goal of collecting, exhibiting and publishing 20th-century Central European, Baltic, Russian and Scottish photography.

His intent in founding Navigator was to bring a substantial and impactful cross-section of notable achievements by artists and photographers in the above regions to the West’s attention, in hopes that this would help create greater solidarity, synergy, and social awareness among nations and individuals of different cultures.

“These places in the past 100 years have seen terrible turmoil. What a horrific century—the suffering, the absolute disruption of normal life—it’s beyond the imagination. And yet artists, playwrights, composers have been

continuously coming forth to document this,” said Forbes.

In 1987, through the Navigator Foundation, Forbes brought Poles and Israelis together at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv, in a major exhibition of Polish photography dealing with the Jewish dimension of Polish life over the past six decades.

Since then, the Navigator Foundation has exhibited extensively abroad, including in France, Russia, Monaco, and England, and at The Boston Athenaeum, Boston Public Library, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, M.I.T. Museum, Fitchburg Art Museum, the Massachusetts State House, Boston City Hall, and Middlebury College Museum of Art.

“Culture and art are able to unite even when politics divide,” explained Forbes.

Navigator’s next initiative will offer a lecture on Gov. James and Gen. John Sullivan, and Irish contributions to the American Revolution and early republic, to be held at The Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach, on April 3, 2017.

In the meantime, Navigator is currently seeking to donate a plaque to the Massachusetts State House honoring

Gov. James and John Sullivan, as well as Irish involvement in the revolution and early republic.

For more information

Navigator Foundation: [www.navigatorfound.org](http://www.navigatorfound.org); [navfound@comcast.net](mailto:navfound@comcast.net)

Murray Forbes: [navfound@comcast.net](mailto:navfound@comcast.net)

Society of the Four Arts, Palm Beach, FL: [www.fourarts.org](http://www.fourarts.org)

The author would like to express his appreciation for and gratitude to the *Westchester Guardian* and its publisher, Sam Zherka, for giving him the opportunity to contribute as Arts writer over the past eight years, and in doing so, help keep appreciation for art and culture alive.

Lee Daniels, a former reporter for the Journal News and Reuters, is Arts writer for the *Westchester Guardian*. His work has appeared in the Danbury News-Times, Litchfield County Times, and Orlando Sentinel. He is the winner of the first-place prize in Non-Fiction in the 2013 Porter Fleming Literary Competition, author of a new book, *Poems from the Edge* (New Freedom, PA: Eber & Wein Publishers, 2016), and an M.F.A. candidate at the School of Letters of the University of the South.

## Edward Hopper’s House is Alive and Well



By Joseph P. Griffith

If Edward Hopper were a presidential candidate, he would probably win in a landslide. Seemingly everyone’s favorite artist, he has never waned in popularity, and his work is constantly being rediscovered even five decades after his death in 1967, at the age of 84. That is due in part to frequent retrospectives at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the caretaker of most of his works and legacy.

He occupies a secure, if somewhat offbeat, place in popular culture. Some of his images are so familiar — the painting “Nighthawks” has been endlessly duplicated in art and films — that they represent something singularly

American. Yet his well-known depictions of solitude and loneliness seem to haunt our culture as much as depict it.

Hopper painted New York, Cape Cod, Paris, New Mexico and many other places. A precious few are right in our own backyard, in Nyack, where he was born and lived as a boy, and there are several other places of significance in his life that can be seen in the area.

The first and foremost stop is the Edward Hopper House Art Center, his boyhood home, at 82 North Broadway in Nyack. Several blocks along the road have been designated as Edward Hopper Way. The house, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971, is far from a comprehensive repository of his work; it is, in fact, rather

spare in the actual work or artifacts of his life. It is now a not-for-profit art center used more as a gallery to showcase 20th-century through contemporary art, but those with an interest in Hopper can use it as a starting point to discover more about his life.

The Queen Anne-style house was built in 1858 by Hopper’s maternal grandfather and was his primary residence until 1910. After his death it fell into disrepair, but was saved from demolition and restored by members of the local community and the Edward Hopper Landmark Preservation Foundation. Extensive renovation was done in the 1970s, and there is ongoing work to maintain it, said Carole Perry, the artistic director and curator.



The Hopper House

One gallery in the house displays a little of his early work, memorabilia and related exhibits. Concerts, lectures and special events take place throughout the year. There is also a gift shop.

The current exhibition, running through Nov. 13, is “Hopper’s Hudson: 100 Years of Painting in the Hudson Valley.” It documents the work of renowned artists who lived and worked along the river during his lifetime, and reveals the change in artistic sensibilities

and the evolving riverscape during those years.

The garden behind the house is displaying sculpture by Santi Hitorangi and James Tyler through Oct. 23. Hitorangi’s carved stone sculptures come out of his Rapa Nui clan heritage on his native Easter Island. Tyler’s Brickhead Assemblage sculptures are unique colossal heads with pre-Columbian, South American, Native American, Asian, African and Western influences.

“We like to mix local artists and more world-renowned ones,” said Perry. “These two are local artists, both residing in Rockland County.”

Jazz concerts are held in the garden in the summer. On the First Friday of each month, opening receptions are held for a featured artist. On Oct. 7 the artist will be Linda Pearlman Karlsburg.

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There will also be an Art Talk by Michelle Donnelly, Curatorial Fellow at the Whitney Museum.

Second Sunday Family Programs allow families to engage in workshops led by artists. The next one on Oct. 9 will have them create tissue paper paintings inspired by 100 years of Hudson River paintings.

Opportunities for artists include annual members' exhibitions and an Annual Juried Small Works Show, now in its 23rd year. The latter draws about 150 entrants. This year's theme is "Small Matters of Great Importance: PAPER+ART," with all works using paper as a primary medium or support. It will be on display from Nov. 19 to Jan. 8, 2017. Opportunities also exist for

interns and docents.

The center created a simple walking tour and publishes an online map of local points of interest related to the artist. The stops along the way include:

The First Baptist Church at Broadway and Fifth Avenue, founded by his grandfather.

"Pretty Penny," at 235 North Broadway, the 1850s Italianate Victorian home of the actress Helen Hayes and her husband, the writer Charles MacArthur. Hopper painted a picture of the house in 1939. Now a private residence, it is difficult to see behind walls and fences.

An unoccupied store at Broadway and School Street, called the "Seven A.M. building" after Hopper's painting of it. The Nyack Library at 59 South Broadway has



Curator Carole Perry with artifacts.

a small exhibit about the building.

Hopper and his wife, Josephine, who died in 1968, are buried in Nyack's Oak Hill Cemetery.

Farther north, on Route 9W in Haverstraw, a three-story Victorian house with a mansard roof sits alongside a railroad track. It is generally acknowledged that this house was the model for his 1925 painting "House by the Railroad." The painting later became Alfred Hitchcock's inspiration for the Norman Bates house in "Psycho."

The Hopper House website (<http://www.edwardhopperhouse.org/>)



The Edward Hopper House

contains links to articles about the house and Hopper, including teacher/student educational resources and one that links his work to that of Hitchcock. A Scholarship for Artistic Curiosity is offered each year.

The organization's \$189,000 annual budget comes from individuals, the New York State Council on the Arts, Rockland County, foundations, corporations, memberships and admissions.

One unique fund-raising event will be the opportunity to spend the night in Hopper's second-floor bedroom. Dr. Jennifer Patton, the executive director, said the room, currently sparsely



The house that inspired the Seven AM painting, located at School Street, off Broadway

furnished, will be reimagined as it might have been in Hopper's time by the Manhattan interior designer Ernest de le Torre. An auction for the right to inhabit it for a night will be conducted by Ellis Sotheby's International Realty, located next door.

Patton said she did not know yet what the opening bid would be, or how much the auction might bring. "It would be great to have several thousands," she said. The money will go toward the house's educational partnership.

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## TRAVEL

## Magical Vienna, the City of Composers and Concerts



By Richard Levy

Music is the most enduring legacy of the magical city of Vienna, Austria, where Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Joseph Haydn, Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Johannes Brahms, Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg and Waltz King, Johann Strauss once lived, composed and performed.

Vienna was home to the Austrian branch of the Habsburg dynasty from 1276-1780. Upon the death of Empress Maria Theresa, her eldest son, Joseph II ascended the throne, representing the Vaudemont branch of the House of Lorraine through his father, Francis Stephen, the Holy Roman Emperor, Francis I. Joseph II's descendants styled themselves the House of Habsburg-Lorraine and ruled up to 1918.

Unless one was fortunate enough to play an instrument or know someone who did, music was initially a luxury enjoyed mostly by the privileged members of the aristocracy, but eventually became an important part of bourgeois life for the growing middle class.

Music is always in the air in Vienna

and visitors can attend a musical performance somewhere in the city every night of the year. The city boasts an estimated 15,000 performances annually. Visit ViennaConcerts.com to find tickets for everything from Operas, including those at the Vienna State Opera, Operettas and Musicals, to varied Classical Concerts, dedicated Mozart programs and Ballets.

Many of the musical events you'll want to experience take place at the Vienna State Opera, one of the leading and most beautiful opera houses in the world.

The Vienna Mozart Orchestra performs at Vienna's most famous concert halls. The Mozart Ensemble Vienna plays in the city's oldest concert hall, Volksper Vienna, Vienna's main stage for opera, operettas, musicals and ballet.

Dine like a true aristocrat and treat yourself to one or more Dinner & Concert packages available at Schönbrunn (a gourmet dinner followed by a concert) or the Salonorchestra Alt-Wien, offering a combination of musical delights and a gala dinner at Kursalon.

And if you're lucky enough to be in Vienna on New Year's Eve, the Vienna Philharmonic has a concert in the Golden Hall of Musikveren. They always conclude their concert with my



Statue of the Plagues

very favorite piece of classical music, "Radetzky March," by Johann Strauss. The audience claps loudly to the music creating a festive musical experience. My girlfriend and I watch the Vienna Philharmonic concert every New Year's Eve on Channel 13. We turn up the volume as they start playing the March

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