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Adolfo Best-Maugard's Influence on the Art and Aesthetics of Katherine Anne Porter

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Katherine Anne Porter in the dress of "a town Indian woman," Mexico City, Mexico, July-August 1930. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 12, Box 3, Item 1035, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

This essay, translated into Spanish, originally appeared in Adolfo Best Maugard: La Espiral del Arte (Mexico City/Cuernavaca: Museo del Palacio de Bellas Artes/Centro Cultural Jardin Borda, 2016). The monograph is the exhibition catalog for a retrospective exhibit of Best Maugard's work exhibited in Cuernavaca and Mexico City in 2016.

Among Katherine Anne Porter's papers at the University of Maryland Libraries is a curious flier. Printed in black on one sheet of light green heavy paper to form four pages, the front page states, "M. KNOEDLER & CO., ANNOUNCE AN EXHIBITION OF TEMPERA PAINTINGS, MEXICAN IN CHARACTER BY ADOLFO BEST-MAUGARD, DECEMBER 1st TO 13th." Above this statement appears a reproduction of one of Best-Maugard's paintings. Inside the flier on two facing pages titled "CATALOGUE," the thirty-five paintings of the exhibition are listed.¹ This announcement is an important piece of evidence that links Porter to Adolfo Best-Maugard. It substantiates Porter's claim that she first journeyed to Mexico in 1920 at the urging of Best-Maugard, whom she had met in Greenwich Village after her move there in October 1919.

In early April 1920, Porter reported that she was collaborating with Best-Maugard on a Mexican ballet for Anna Pavlova. Among Porter's correspondence of April-August 1920 are references to her work on ballet-pantomimes with Best-Maugard, both for Pavlova and for Adolph Bolm.² Porter's version of the outcome of her collaboration on the Pavlova ballet was that it was not performed in New York in 1920 because the city fire authorities refused to sanction the production as Best-Maugard's scenery was painted, according to Mexican practice, on paper.³ The cancelling of the ballet's 1920 New York performance can be verified in contemporary reviews of Pavlova's New York tour.⁴



*M. KNOEDLER & CO., ANNOUNCE AN EXHIBITION
OF TEMPERA PAINTINGS, MEXICAN IN CHARACTER
BY ADOLFO BEST-MAUGARD, DECEMBER 1st TO 13th.*

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MRS. ALBERT STERNER

"M. Knoedler & Co. Announce an Exhibition of Tempera Paintings Mexican in Character by Adolfo Best-Maugard, December 1st to 13th." Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 7, Box 8, Programs—(Exhibitions), Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

This ballet-pantomime work was probably one of the immediate causes of Porter's first visit to Mexico. Porter's notes from her first week in Mexico City in November 1920 suggest that among the prominent reasons for her visit was to prepare a ballet-pantomime for the festivities planned for the centenary of Mexican independence in September 1921.⁵

Mexico had a salutary effect on Porter's writing. Her first review in the English section of *El Herald de Mexico*, "Blasco Ibanez on 'Mexico in Revolution,'"⁶ unlike the journalism and short fiction she previously published, is recognizably the work of the artist known as Katherine Anne Porter. The transformation in Porter's fiction that took place between August 1920 and December 1922 is remarkable.⁷ In this period of a little over two years, Porter metamorphosed from an ordinary or competent writer into an artist. One of the most crucial variables had to be her first two trips to Mexico. Important to those first two visits was her interaction with and exposure to Mexican art and artists notably Adolfo Best-Maugard, who was directly responsible for Porter's decision to travel to Mexico in 1920.

Porter arrived in Mexico City on 6 November 1920,⁸ roughly two weeks before her review of Blasco Ibanez's *Mexico in Revolution* appeared. Porter produced reviews of books, magazines, and music as well as occasional pieces for *El Herald de Mexico*'s English language section through 25 December when the section disappeared. By 31 December 1920, Porter was embarked on another journalistic endeavor, managing editor and contributor to the *Magazine of Mexico*. Financed by a group of wealthy American businessmen for the purpose of promoting American business and development in Mexico, the magazine's March 1921 issue marked Porter's debut and is notable in reaffirming her connection to Best-Maugard. Although the lead article by Porter is devoted to President Alvaro Obregon ("The New Man and the New Order"), a photographic essay on Adolfo Best-Maugard takes a prominent position among the articles urging and encouraging American investment in Mexico ("Mexican Artist Interprets Mexico"). The text for this piece, presumably by Porter, consists of captions for the photographs: a photograph of Best-Maugard followed by reproductions of three of his works.

Adolfo Best-Maugard, who has created an art form founded on the use of Aztec primitive designs as they are found on temples, potteries and fresco carvings in the ruins of ancient Mexico. With these motifs as a base, Mr. Best has done brilliant work both in tempera and oils, his designs being of a high fantastic quality. He is recognized in his home land as of great ability and has received high recognition in New York.

Of original and authentic value is the work of Adolfo Best-Maugard. His métier is the interpretation of the art sense of his own country. His work in line and color, above all in mood, is definitely Mexican; brilliant, unsentimental, with sophisticated sharpness of edge, yet filled with enormous gayety. This painting of two dancers in fiesta costume has a coloring in the original that is shockingly brilliant. Violent greens and reds and gold riot on a background of vivid blue.

Though the giant flowers are derived from an old Spanish Brocade pattern, and the figure is touched with Italian influence, this portrait of a young girl is entirely Mexican in character and color.

A pleasant study of a type familiar in interior Mexico—the languid round chinned girl in her ranchera costume may be accepted as fairly representative of Mexican-Indian beauty.⁹

Porter's captions reveal her knowledge of Best-Maugard's theory of the seven motifs common to all primitive art, which grew out of his commission to make drawings of the ceramic fragments anthropologist Franz Boas collected in Mexico in 1911-1912 and subsequently published in *Album de Colecciones Arqueológicas; Seleccionadas y Arregladas por Franz Boas; Ilustraciones por Adolfo Best; Texto por Manuel Gamio*.¹⁰ Although the photographic essay is the only surviving documentary link between Porter and Best-Maugard that survived from her first residence in Mexico, it is significant.

Best-Maugard's theories and the subjects of his art work apparently influenced Porter's work and

Katherine Anne Porter Society Newsletter

Members are welcome to submit articles, announcements, and comments for the society's newsletter. Please send them to Beth Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts Emerita, University of Maryland Libraries, College Park, MD 20742, alvarez@umd.edu, and/or Christine Grogan, President of the Katherine Anne Porter Society, clg5579@psu.edu. Society membership inquiries should be directed to Beth Alvarez. Entries for the annual bibliographical essay on Porter should be addressed to Christine Grogan.

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aesthetics in this crucial period of her artistic development. His influence may be detected in "The Fiesta of Guadalupe," published in *El Herald* on 13 December 1920. In it, she employed the technique of "painting" a series of verbal pictures similar in content and focus to some of the Best-Maugard's paintings: landscape and genre scenes featuring Mexican subjects including fiestas and daily life and of famous sites and buildings. Porter used the same technique of sketching a series of vivid pictures of the contemporary scene in Mexico City in the propagandistic piece she co-authored with Roberto Haberman, "Striking the Lyric Note in Mexico."¹¹ Like the Best-Maugard works reproduced in *The Magazine of Mexico*, Porter's "In a Mexican Patio"¹² and "Xochimilco,"¹³ written during her first residence in Mexico, depict typical Mexican types and genre scenes: portraits of bourgeois and working class Mexicans, including such common subjects as a boy in a sombrero and a horseman dressed in charro;

domestic interiors; gardens; landscapes; and well-known locales.

Sometime before 5 September 1921, Porter left Mexico and settled in Fort Worth, Texas, for a time, working on material she had gathered in Mexico and resuming her journalism work. Early in 1922, she returned to New York City, where, on 24 March 1922, Porter received a telegram summoning her to return to Mexico to help in assembling a Mexican folk art exhibit to travel to the United States. Porter travelled to Mexico soon after receiving the telegram and arrived in Mexico City in early April 1922. The exhibition in which Porter was to play a part grew out of the previous year's celebrations for the centenary of Mexican independence. As a part of the celebrations, an exhibition of popular or folk art was assembled and opened to the public by President Alvaro Obregon on 19 September 1921.¹⁴ The accompanying monograph, written and illustrated by Mexican artist Dr. Atl, documented the contemporary "artes populares en Mexico." The project for which Porter was summoned to Mexico in March 1922 grew directly out of the exhibition and monograph assembled for the centenary. The Mexican government saw a prospective travelling exhibition and accompanying monograph as good propaganda and public relations for a Mexican government which desperately wanted U. S. recognition. Porter's primary contribution to the exhibit was the monograph, *Outline of Mexican Popular Arts and Crafts*. This project was crucial in bringing her into close contact with Mexican art and artists, among whom was Best-Maugard.

In April 1922, Best-Maugard was serving as head of the Department of Drawing and Handicrafts of the Secretariat of Public Education headed by José Vasconcelos. During his tenure, Best-Maugard's method for teaching creative design, based on his theory that there are seven simple fundamental motifs and signs that can be combined and arranged into designs, was instituted in Mexican public schools. Work of children taught by this method was included in the exhibit for which Porter wrote the *Outline of Mexican Popular Arts and Crafts*. Dated May 1922 in Porter's "Acknowledgment," this 56-page pamphlet was published in Los Angeles in November 1922 and was given away to those who visited the exhibition. In the work, Porter praises and defends



OUTLINE *of* MEXICAN
ARTS AND CRAFTS · *By*
KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

Katherine Anne Porter, *Outline of Mexican Popular Arts and Crafts*, Los Angeles: Young & McCallister, 1922. Katherine Anne Porter Library, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

the native customs and history of the Indian and his art and champions the art from the colonial and contemporary periods which reflects indigenous or Mexican-born Spanish culture. The direct influence of Best-Maugard is evident in Part I: PreHispanic: she alludes to his “study of early design” and asserts that “no crossed line” existed in pre-Hispanic Mexican art nor in the work of contemporary Mexican craftsmen, whose “line of beauty is the bold flaring circle.”¹⁵

As one of Porter’s most important guides as she completed work on the *Outline of Mexican Popular Arts and Crafts*, Best-Maugard is mentioned prominently in her letter published on 5 June 1922 in the *Christian Science Monitor*:

And we are bringing some of Best’s wonderful decorative designs, which bring back so vividly that rare and mysterious art and culture which remains to us only in archaeological remains, and which is the real inherited inspiration of the native Mexican art today.¹⁶

Porter’s close association with him had changed immeasurably her own attitudes toward art and the artist. Her interaction with him and with other artists, idealistic politicians, and art during her April to June 1922 stay in Mexico was perhaps the most decisive factor in bringing about the change which resulted in the story “María Concepción.” However, before it was published in December 1922, Porter learned of the problems that Best-Maugard and the others encountered in getting the exhibit out of Mexico and mounted in the United States.

In August 1922, Best-Maugard, Emilio Amero, Julio Castellanos, Xavier Guerrero, and Roberto Turnbull had travelled to Los Angeles to arrange for the opening of the exhibit at the Los Angeles Museum. The exhibition had become mired in problems as soon as they attempted to bring it in to the United States; Mexican government financial support for it was not received until October and, by 8 October, Amero, Castellanos, and Best-Maugard had all returned to Mexico.¹⁷ Because of delay in receipt of support, the exhibit lost its exhibition space in the Los Angeles Museum and had to be divided into two parts. The first of these, comprising 5,000 pieces of Mexican folk art, was opened for a two-week period

on 10 November 1922 at a space at 807 West Seventh Street. This part of the exhibit, according to the newspaper accounts, comprised Mexican Indian work in copper, steel, stone, leather, thread work, lace, beadwork, pottery, gold and silver jewelry, and wax and clay statuettes as well as some of the paintings of Guerrero and Best-Maugard.¹⁸ This exhibit must have been extremely popular because the newspaper reported on 19 November that daily attendance was 3,000 to 4,000 persons.¹⁹ The second part of the exhibit opened at the MacDowell Club galleries in the Tajo Building, First Street and Broadway, on 20 November 1922. The exhibit contained work by Guerrero, Best-Maugard, and the “best work of the students of Mexico City’s grammar and high schools and art academies” and was to close on 1 December.²⁰

While Best-Maugard and his colleagues were in Los Angeles attempting to mount the exhibition, Porter continued to remain focused on Mexico. “Where Presidents Have No Friends,”²¹ an attempt at positive public relations for Mexico, was Porter’s first piece published in the mainstream American magazine market. Her “Two Ancient Mexican Pyramids—the Core of a City Unknown Until a Few Years Ago”²² is clearly an outgrowth of Porter’s work on the *Outline* and of her informal study of Mexico. However, the influence of Best-Maugard’s art and aesthetics as well as Porter’s Mexican experiences and reading are evident in her first mature piece of fiction, “María Concepción,” published in December 1922 in *Century*. Set in the outskirts of Mexico City, modelled on the archaeological site Azcapotzalco and nearby villages, Porter’s story delineates a portrait of a contemporary Mexican indigenous woman. Best-Maugard’s influence can be seen in the effective use of the pictorial method utilized in her earliest pieces with Mexican subjects. The work includes vivid fully realized portraits of the title character and others. One of these, a double portrait of María Concepción’s husband and her rival for his affections, María Rosa, evokes the Mexican folk dance, the jarabe. Best-Maugard painted a dancing “China y Charro” in 1918, and the ballet on which Porter and he collaborated included the jarabe. Porter includes details of the architecture, flora, clothing, and native arts and crafts in other portraits as well as in the genre scenes depicted in the story. In her skillful evocation of pre-Hispanic art, artifacts, and rituals, she points back to Best-Maugard’s work, which she

had characterized in 1920: “an art form founded on the use of Aztec primitive designs as they are found on temples, potteries and fresco carvings in the ruins of ancient Mexico.”²³

Sometime in the spring of 1923 Porter was back in Mexico to gather materials for a special Mexican issue of the magazine *Survey Graphic*. During this third of Porter’s Mexican sojourns, her second canonical short story, “The Martyr,”²⁴ was published. Although its central character Ruben, a thinly veiled sketch of Diego Rivera, and the other major character in the story, a newspaper and magazine caricaturist, are artists, neither are depictions of Best-Maugard. Unlike the fully realized portraits and genre scenes fleshed out with vivid detail in “María Concepción,” the characters and situations in “The Martyr” resemble caricatures—simple line drawings somewhat analogous to drawings created making use of Best-Maugard’s method.

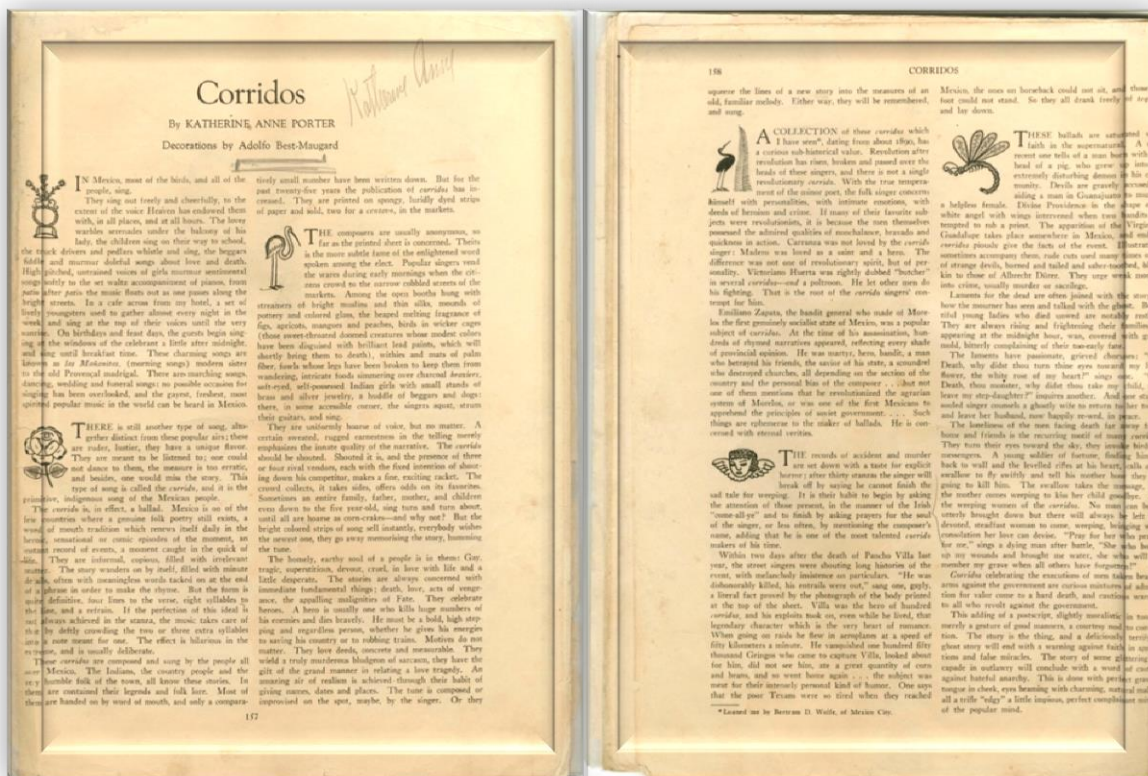
It is significant that “The Martyr” and Porter’s famous justification for her Mexican subject matter, “Why I Write About Mexico,” appeared in the United States at the same time as Best-Maugard’s book on the creative method was published in Mexico. Later published in English as *A Method for Creative Design*, Best-Maugard’s book delineates a method, drawn from ancient Aztec motifs, which makes drawing a simple process anyone can execute. This work also urged use of American subjects and forms of art.²⁵ In attempting to justify Mexico as her “familiar country” Porter, in parallel fashion, advocated that “The artist can do no more than deal with familiar and beloved things from which he could not, and, above all would not escape.”²⁶

Porter’s third trip to Mexico was, like the one of 1922, primarily devoted to Mexican art. Although there are a wide range of materials in the *Survey Graphic* issue, Porter’s contribution was confined to artistic subjects: art, music, poetry. Porter’s name appears as sole author only on “Corridos,” but she is credited on two other pieces: “The Guild Spirit in Mexican Art” by Diego Rivera “as told to Katherine Anne Porter” and as translator of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz’s sonnet, “To a Portrait of the Poet,” as well as the author of the accompanying brief note on the poet.²⁷

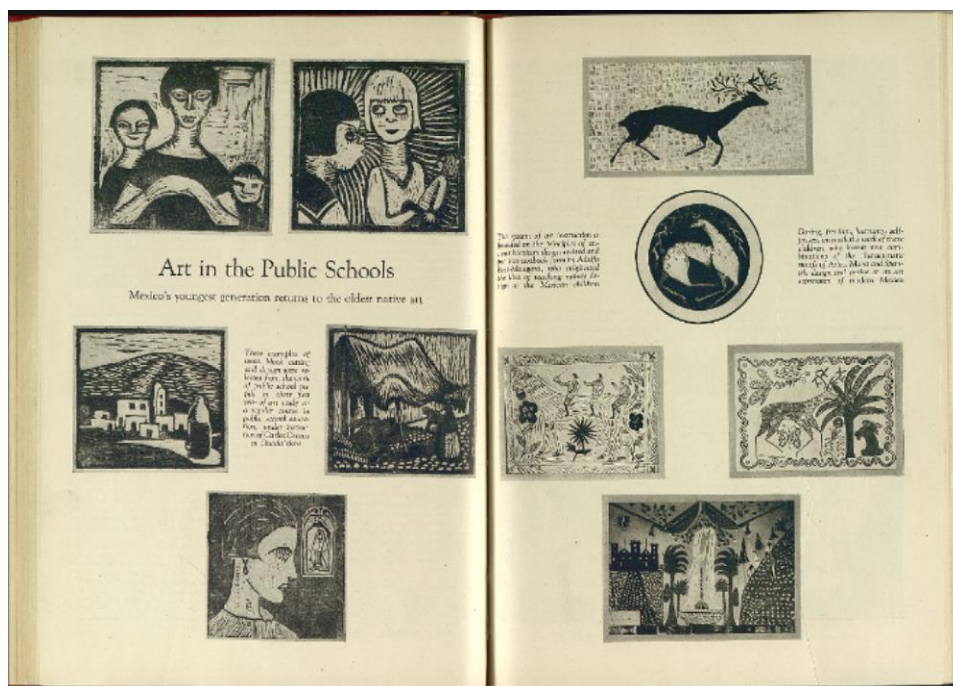
Although not as prominent as Diego Rivera in the issue, Best-Maugard is represented. Porter made use of Best-Maugard’s line drawings as “decorations” for “Corridos.” Three of them actually appeared in *Método de dibujo: tradición, resurgimiento y evolución del arte mexicano*,²⁸ the Spanish-language first edition of the work that elaborated his system of design and was used as a textbook. His influence may also be observed in the text of “Corridos.” The vividly conceived descriptions of singing Mexicans and of the Mexican market scene where *corridos* are sold align this piece with Porter’s other fine nonfiction about Mexico: “The Fiesta of Guadalupe,” “In a Mexican Patio,” and “Xochimilco.” In the two-page feature, titled “Art in the Public Schools: Mexico’s youngest generation returns to the oldest native art,” one page reproduces five works of Mexican children taught by the Best-Maugard method.²⁹ It is also likely that the “tail piece decorations” that appear on pages 166, 169, and 181 are Best-Maugard’s.³⁰ He is also alluded to or mentioned in Pedro Henriquez Ureña’s “The Revolution in Intellectual Life,”³¹ José Vasconcelos’s “Educational Aspirations,”³² and Diego Rivera’s “The Guild Spirit in Mexican Art.”³³

After her autumn 1923 return to New York and completion of the *Survey Graphic* work, Porter continued to act as a guide or expert on Mexico. Significantly, her first book review for the *New York Herald Tribune*, one of the city’s major newspapers, took up two books by Americans on Mexico.³⁴ The second of her short stories set in Mexico with Mexican characters, “Virgin Violeta,” was published in December 1924 in *Century*. It, like “María Concepción,” made use of the Mexican subject matter and pictorial techniques to which Best-Maugard had introduced her and that had been so successful in her earlier story and nonfiction set in Mexico. In January 1925, Porter’s translation of a section from Diego Rivera’s notebooks appeared in *Arts*. This piece recalls some of Best-Maugard’s insights on the “marvelous popular art in Mexico” produced by “members of the unmixed autochthonous races.”³⁵

However, by June 1925, Porter had reconnected directly with Best-Maugard. He had contracted with Alfred K. Knopf to publish an English-language



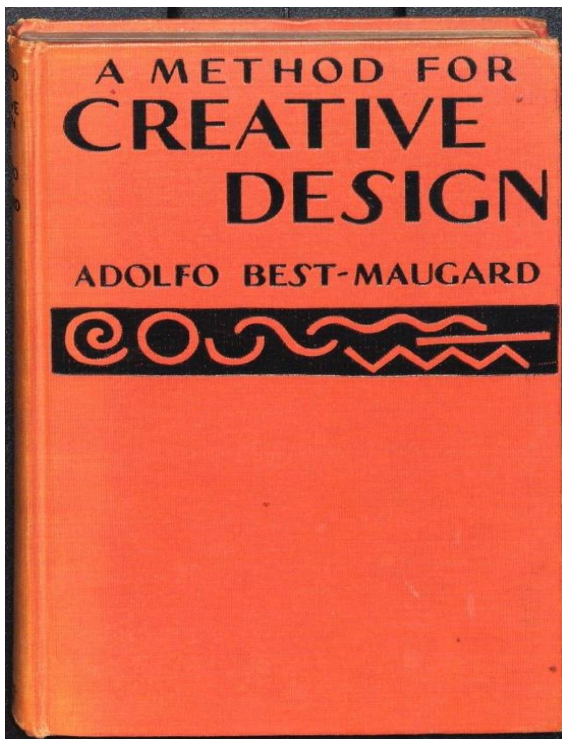
Katherine Anne Porter, "Corridos," *Survey Graphic* 5 (May 1924), pp. 157-158. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 8, *Survey Graphic*, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.



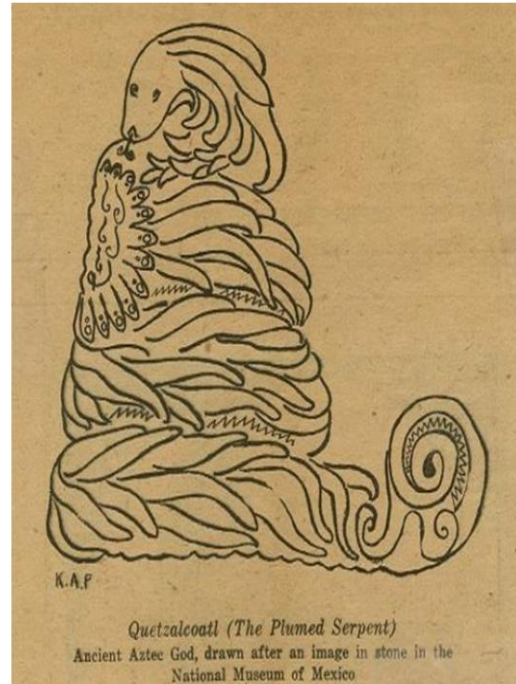
"Art in the Public Schools," *Survey Graphic* (May 1924), pp. 169-171. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 8, *Survey Graphic*, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

edition of his 1923 work and apparently Porter was paid to provide a preface and revise the English of Best-Maugard's rough draft. This book, *A Method for Creative Design*, differs significantly from the 1923 Spanish-language edition. The earlier work was both a polemic arguing for the creation of Mexican art accessible in schools, offices, and public places as well as a textbook to be used in the public schools.³⁶ In contrast, *A Method for Creative Design*, intended for the U.S. audience, included none of the political content directly relating to Mexico and, instead, set forth Best-Maugard's artistic philosophy. Unlike the Mexican edition, this edition did not include formal exercises for students, and it drew examples from the primitive art of cultures other than those in Mexico.³⁷

A Method for Creative Design, also of crucial importance in understanding Porter's emerging aesthetic, was published 19 November 1926. Notably, she shared Best-Maugard's beliefs in the centrality of art in everyday life, the subjects appropriate for art, the crucial nature of training and craftsmanship, the superiority of the artist to the common man, and the importance of the feminine,



Adolfo Best-Maugard, *A Method for Creative Design*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926.



Katherine Anne Porter, illustration for "Quetzalcoatl," *New York Herald Tribune Books*, March 7, 1926, pp. 1-2. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 6, Box 2, By Porter, 1925-1929, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

intuitive, and emotional in the creative process. Another, and perhaps more obvious, result of Porter's work on *A Method for Creative Design* was a series of illustrations. Porter's debut as a published graphic artist in one of her feminist reviews, "The Great Catherine," came close on the heels of her work editing Best-Maugard's manuscript.³⁸ Eventually three additional sketches were published as illustrations of her book reviews in *New York Herald Tribune Books*: of Quetzalcoatl, Genevieve Taggard, and Gertrude Stein.³⁹ These simple line drawings make use of Best-Maugard's method, employing the seven motifs (the spiral, circle, half-circle, two half circles in the form of a letter S, wavy line, zigzag line, and straight line) combined and arranged as the illustrations in *A Method for Creative Design* had set forth.

Porter's direct connection to Mexico, and indirectly to Best-Maugard, between autumn 1925, when she completed her work on his English-language monograph, and April 1930, when she returned for her last extended residence in Mexico, came

PART I

I. THE SEVEN MOTIFS

The suggestions and rules that we will follow are simple and easily understood by everyone. They are quickly grasped and retained in the mind of the student.

In this method, there are seven simple motifs and signs, which we consider as fundamental, and a few rules to follow, and these, once in the student's memory, will enable him to make an infinite number of combinations and designs which he will enjoy. These seven motifs are already well known to us, and we find them in the forms and shapes of all our surroundings.

The first is the Spiral or the very familiar scroll motif, suggested in the whirlpool, or in the rolled shape of such things as the snail's shell.



The second is the simple Circle. We see it in the shape of the sun or in the ripples in the surface of still water into which a stone has been dropped.



1

2

CREATIVE DESIGN

The third is the Half-circle, found in the rainbow and in the crescent moon.



The fourth is Two Half-circles in the form of the letter S, like the shape of flames of fire.



The fifth is the Wavy line; we see it in water waves or in the shape of wavy hair.



The sixth is a broken Zigzag line; it suggests the outline of the broken peaks of mountains or the lightning.



The seventh is nothing but the simple Straight line which gives the position of quiet hanging things, trunks of trees, or the ocean line of the horizon.



These seven motifs, which, as we have seen, are already familiar to us in the shapes of natural objects, are the fundamentals of this method of design, and everything that we do hereafter will be in the way of combining and arranging two or more of the motifs into attractive designs. There are two rules to be remembered:

1. Never cross lines, or allow one line to interfere with another, but let every line go on its way without touching the others.

primarily through her book reviewing and free-lance writing for the New York market. The books she reviewed include Miguel Covarrubias's *The Prince of Wales and Other Famous Americans*, D. H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*, *The Rosalie Letters from Mexico*, T. A. Willard's *The City of the Sacred Well*, *Some Mexican Problems* (containing essays by Moises Saenz and Herbert I. Priestley), *Aspects of Mexican Civilization* (essays by José Vasconcelos and Manuel Gamio), Anita Brenner's *Idols Behind Altars*, and *The Frescoes of Diego Rivera*.⁴⁰ Her review of a New York exhibition of Mexican and American children's art ("Children and Art") makes explicit and positive statements about the Best-Maugard method, "in the curriculum of every public school in the Mexican Republic, a serious item in their national program of education." "I saw the very beginning of this work in Mexico, which amounted there to a revolution in educational methods."⁴¹

The influence of Best-Maugard's art and aesthetics can be discerned in the fiction completed before her return to Mexico in late April 1930. Taking Best-Maugard's advice to use "genuine American elements," "modern American surroundings," and "American forms,"⁴² she chose American settings and characters for the five short stories she published between October 1927 and November 1929. "He,"⁴³ drew on her observations of rural life in Texas and Connecticut and was clearly aimed at exposing the conditions of the agrarian poor. "Magic,"⁴⁴ the story of a New Orleans prostitute narrated by an unnamed black maid to her employer, Madame Blanchard, evinces Porter's sympathy for the plight of those outside the middle class and her preoccupation with the roles and conditions of women. "Rope,"⁴⁵ a portrait of the strained relations of a husband and wife during a day in the country, came from Porter's relationship with one of her lovers. "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall,"⁴⁶ depicting the last day in the life of a pioneer woman, partially modelled on Porter's own grandmother, explores both women's roles and death. "Theft,"⁴⁷ depicts an incident in the life of a woman living in New York City, a disguised self-portrait of Porter, whose "principle of rejection" has left her paralyzed with gloomy inertia. "He," "Magic," "Rope," and "Theft" resemble sketches or caricatures, simple line drawings that suggest an outline but do not flesh out the subjects. They resemble Porter's published illustrations for her book

reviews, which were constructed making use of Best-Maugard's method.

The last of the stories Porter completed before her April 1930 return to Mexico was "Flowering Judas."⁴⁸ "Flowering Judas" came out of the Mexican material Porter had begun gathering in 1920 and had conceived of as a book since 1921. In fact, a few months after the story was completed, Porter signed contracts with Harcourt, Brace for a novel entitled *Thieves' Market* and a collection of her previously published short stories.⁴⁹ Although "Flowering Judas" is set in Mexico, its central character, Laura, unlike those of Porter's previous stories set in Mexico, is an American. The story is powerful because it draws on the emotions Porter had felt in May 1921, when there was political upheaval across Mexico and she and other foreigners were threatened with deportation or imprisonment. Laura, like the protagonist of "Theft," is another of Porter's self-portraits, here as a betrayer or Judas. The story also expresses Porter's changed attitude toward Mexico and Mexicans, with its depiction of the cynicism and careerism of the revolutionists for whom she had such high hopes in 1920-1921. Porter also returns to the use of more detailed descriptive techniques that had characterized her earliest fiction and nonfiction set in Mexico. She creates set pieces that function like different genres of painting—portraits, landscapes, domestic interiors, still lifes—and includes references to the popular arts. Best-Maugard's paintings of typical Mexican types are recalled in Porter's charming sketch of Laura's young Zapatista suitor dressed in charro. Also significantly for the connection to Best-Maugard is the reference in the story to "clay masks with the power of human speech" (101).⁵⁰ Her use of the mask as a symbol resonates with Best-Maugard's assertion that the mask "transforms and protects us, gives us other personalities and preserves our own hidden self behind the mask. Because of this the mask is also a symbol."⁵¹

At the end of April 1930, almost five months before *Flowering Judas*, the collection of her short stories, was published, Porter was back in Mexico for her last period of semi-permanent residency.⁵² Although she was to return to Mexico briefly in June 1960 and November-December 1964, Porter was never again to take up permanent residence or make protracted visits as she did four times in the period between 1920 and

1931. The frenetic pace of her life once she returned to Mexico, marked by trips to nearby sites, visits from friends and acquaintances from New York and elsewhere, socializing with expatriate friends and acquaintances, beginning a relationship that culminated in marriage in 1933, and taking up the study of the piano, was not conducive to the completion of her work. She published only three pieces, a translation, a nonfiction Mexican piece, and a book review, during this sixteen-month residence and the longest in duration. Her nonfiction piece, "Leaving the Petate"⁵³ was an American outsider's observation of Mexican life, an attempt to assess the changes since 1920, when the revolution had triumphed.

"Hacienda," first published as a nonfiction article in October 1932, had the same intention. However, it is also significant because it represents the last clearly documented connection between Porter and Best-Maugard. The article and the revised fictional version published in a fine press edition in 1934 are based on an actual trip Porter made to Hacienda Tetlapayac northeast of Mexico City in mid-July 1931. The Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein had journeyed to this pulque hacienda in early May 1931 in order to film a portion of an ambitious work tentatively entitled *Que Viva Mexico*. Eisenstein, his assistant director, cameraman, and business manager had arrived in Mexico in early December 1930. Apparently, sometime in December 1930, Porter met Sergei Eisenstein,⁵⁴ who invited her to visit the filming at Tetlapayac. Best-Maugard was among the Mexican government's advisors to Eisenstein during his work on the project, and Porter encountered Best-Maugard when she arrived at the hacienda. It seems that Porter arrived on July 15, the day on which an Indian actor accidentally killed her sister, an incident that is central to "Hacienda."

In the fictional version of "Hacienda," Betancourt, the art advisor/censor for the Russian film maker, is modeled on Best-Maugard. Here Betancourt has compromised his artistic calling for "Wealth," "the unobtrusive companion of all true Success" (159). He has sold his "cultured taste" to the Mexican government as if it were a commodity by taking on "the official duty to see that nothing hurtful to the national dignity got in the way of the foreign cameras." A long paragraph description of Betancourt's philosophy, or "Way of Life" clearly

rejects Best-Maugard's philosophy which Porter knew intimately from her work on *A Method for Creative Design*. Her individual portraits of Betancourt are ironic and mocking. In one, he lifts "a narrow, pontifical hand, waving away vulgar human pity which always threatened, buzzing like a fly at the edges of his mind." This gesture accompanies his cynical remark about the peasant girl killed by her brother: "I am sorry for everything. . . . But when you consider. . . what her life would have been like in this place, it is much better that she is dead." Porter adds that he similarly waves away "beggars, the poor, the deformed, the old and ugly." This portrait suggests a debased priest of materialism. Porter also satirizes Betancourt's vanity and affectation in a portrait of him dressed in "the correct costume for a moving-picture director. . . which completed some sort of precious illusion he cherished about himself."⁵⁵ Porter's depiction of the corruption, decay, dissolution, and depravity that pervade the hacienda that stands for Mexico convey her disillusionment with what the Mexican revolution had promised. It is not surprising that Best-Maugard became one of those she singled out for criticism, as he had been directly responsible for Porter's initial visit to Mexico.

The experience of Mexico was important to Porter's art and aesthetic. She absorbed, in her immersion in the art and culture, ideas, motifs, images, and theories that played an important role in her work after her 1930-1931 Mexican residence. That work includes "Hacienda" and the short story "That Tree" (1934), but her best work draws from her personal experiences, mostly unconnected to Mexico, and was completed by 1940. She remained a "Mexican expert" for the New York reviewing market through 1943, writing on Carleton Beals's novel *The Stones Awake*, Bertram Wolfe and Diego Rivera's *Portrait of Mexico*, and Anita Brenner and George Leighton's *The Wind that Swept Mexico*.⁵⁶ She also provided introductions for a collection of Latin American stories in translation and for Eugene Pressly's translation of J. J. Fernandez Lizardi's *The Itching Parrot*, which was published under her name.⁵⁷ When she returned to her Mexican material in "The Charmed Life" and "St. Augustine and the Bullfight,"⁵⁸ Porter worked in the vein of the memoir rather than in fiction. The power and effectiveness of the three short novels, "Noon Wine," "Pale Horse, Pale Rider," and "Old Mortality," although not

Mexican in subject, are partly attributable to the theory and technique Porter gleaned from Adolfo Best-Maugard. Her novel, *Ship of Fools*, which draws on her Mexican experience and material, never rises to the heights of the earlier work. What Porter learned in Mexico was to serve her well. Introduced to Porter by Best-Maugard, the powerful images, motifs, and aesthetic theories of Mexican art which influenced her best fiction and nonfiction are the source of the seemingly classical qualities of her work. It was Porter's inner turmoil which created the ferment which led to her writing, but it was her aesthetic, largely influenced by her Mexican connections of 1920-1931, which led to her art.

Notes

¹ Among the Best-Maugard works listed are Judas Rojo (Ballet), China Poblana (Pavlova's Mexican Ballet), Astec Warrior (Ballet), La Fiesta (Bolm's Mexican Ballet), and three Mexican Ballet costume designs. A contemporary review of the exhibit is "Paintings Mexican in Character," *New York Times* (4-12-1919), p. 16.

² Katherine Anne Porter to Gay Porter Holloway and Harrison Boone Porter, 1 April 1920; Katherine Anne Porter to Gay Porter Holloway, 4 July 1920; Si Seadler to Katherine Anne Porter, 25 August 1920; Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Series 1, Boxes 60, 36, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

³ Katherine Anne Porter, "Reflections on Willa Cather," in *Collected Essays and Occasional Writings of Katherine Anne Porter*, New York, Seymour Lawrence/Delacorte, p. 33.

⁴ "7,000 See Pavlova Dance," *New York Times* (21-10-1920), p. 11, reported that *Mexican Dances* would be "new tonight" on Pavlova's program. However, "Pavlova Makes a Record," *New York Times* (24-10-1920), p. 22, related that the producer, Mr. Gallo, "announced that the interesting 'Mexican Folk Dances' must wait till Pavlova's return from her Pacific tour, when it is hoped to play another week at the Manhattan."

Mexican Dances had its genesis in Mexico City in 1919. Pavlova had met Best-Maugard in Mexico City in early 1919, where they and others had first collaborated on some Mexican dances for her touring

troupe. Apparently, they made further plans for elaborating these dances for her American and European tours of 1920-1921. The revised version of *Mexican Dances*, which was performed in New York in March 1921 while Porter was in Mexico, is the ballet to which Porter refers, although she is not credited in any of the existing sources.

⁵ In notes among Porter's papers, certainly written during her first week in Mexico (6-14 November 1920), is a section commenting on the English society notes written by Porter's recent acquaintance Thorberg Haberman in the newspaper *El Heraldo de Mexico*. Porter remarks that Mrs. Haberman "is enthusiastic about my ballet pantomime work, and will be a splendid help to me." Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Series 2, Box 12, Mexican daybook, 1920-1921, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

⁶ Katherine Anne Porter, "Blasco Ibanez on 'Mexico in Revolution,'" *El Heraldo de Mexico* (22-11-1920), p. 7.

⁷ After relocating to New York City, Porter published three children's stories: "The Shattered Star," *Everyland*, vol. 2 (January 1920), pp. 422-423; "The Faithful Princess," *Everyland*, vol. 2 (February 1920), pp. 42-43; "The Magic Ear Ring," *Everyland*, vol. 2 (March 1920), pp. 86-87. She published "The Adventures of Hadji" in *Asia*, vol. 20 (August 1920), pp. 683-684. All of these retell stories from traditional sources. "María Concepción," published in *Century*, vol. 105 (December 1922), pp. 224-239, appeared in *Flowering Judas* (1930), the first collection of Porter's stories that was published and in *Flowering Judas and Other Stories* (1935) and *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter* (1965), which won the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize.

⁸ Thorberg Haberman's gossip column in the English language section of *El Heraldo de Mexico* reported on 9 November 1920 that Porter had arrived from New York on November 6th and that she had collaborated with Adolfo Best-Maugard on an Aztec-Mexican ballet-pantomime in that city.

⁹ Katherine Anne Porter, "Mexican Artist Interprets Mexico," *Magazine of Mexico*, (March 1921), pp. 46-49.

¹⁰ *Album de Colecciones Arqueológicas; Seleccionadas y Arregladas por Franz Boas; Ilustraciones por Adolfo Best; Texto por Manuel Gamio*, Mexico City: Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia, and Etnografía, 1921.

¹¹ "Striking the Lyric Note in Mexico," *New York Call*, "The Call Magazine," (16-01-1921), pp. 1, 3.

¹² Katherine Anne Porter, "In a Mexican Patio," *Magazine of Mexico* (April 1921).

¹³ Katherine Anne Porter, "Xochimilco," *Christian Science Monitor*, (31-05-1921), p. 10.

¹⁴ Dr. Atl, *Las Artes Populares en Mexico*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. Mexico City, Editorial "Cultura," 1922, vol. I, p. 21.

¹⁵ Katherine Anne Porter, "Outline of Mexican Popular Arts and Crafts," in *Uncollected Early Prose of Katherine Anne Porter*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1993, pp. 142, 150, 151.

¹⁶ Porter's letter appeared in G.S.L., "A Letter from Mexico and the Gleam of Montezuma's Golden Roofs," *Christian Science Monitor*, (5-06-1922), p. 22. G.S.L. is probably George Sill Leonard, art editor of *Century*.

¹⁷ Roberto Turnbull to Katherine Anne Porter, 10 October 1922, Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Series 1, Box 38, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

¹⁸ "Mexican Art Exhibit Opens," *Los Angeles Times*, (11-11-1922), p. 1; Anthony Anderson, "Of Art and Artists," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, (12-11-1922), sec. 3, p. 10.

¹⁹ "Mexican Folk Music Planned at Art Exhibit," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, (19-11-1922), sec. 2, p. 1.

²⁰ "Mexicans Will Show Pictures," *Los Angeles Times*, (20-11-1922), sec. 2, p. 2.

²¹ Katherine Anne Porter, "Where Presidents Have No Friends," *Century*, vol. 104 (July 1922), pp. 373-384.

²² Katherine Anne Porter, "Two Ancient Mexican

Pyramids—the Core of a City Unknown Until a Few Years Ago," *Christian Science Monitor*, (19-09-1922), p. 7.

²³ Katherine Anne Porter, "Mexican Artist Interprets Mexico," *Magazine of Mexico*, (March 1921), p. 46.

²⁴ "The Martyr" and the biographical note that has come to be known as "Why I Write about Mexico" were published in *Century*, vol. 106 (July 1923), pp. 410-413 and unpagged.

²⁵ Adolfo Best-Maugard, *A Method for Creative Design*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926, p. 116.

²⁶ Katherine Anne Porter, "Why I Write about Mexico," in *Collected Essays and Occasional Writings of Katherine Anne Porter*, New York, Seymour Lawrence/Delacorte, pp. 355, 356.

²⁷ In addition to pieces by the authors mentioned above, the contents for the May 1924 issue of *Survey Graphic* included articles by Frank Tannenbaum, Plutarco Elias Calles, Carleton Beals, Felipe Carrillo, Manuel Gamio, Roberto Haberman, Ramón P. DeNegri, Elena Landazuri, Dr. Atl, Pedro Henrique Ureña, José Vasconcelos, Esperanza Velasquez Bringas, Charles A. Thomson, Anthony Crocker, and Robert N. McLean.

²⁸ Adolfo Best-Maugard, *Método de dibujo: tradición, resurgimiento y evolución del arte mexicano*, Mexico City: Departamento Editorial de la Secretaría de Educación, 1923. The three "decorations" used in "Corridos" are located on pages 65 and 73 of *Método de dibujo*.

²⁹ The caption for these drawings states, "The system of art instruction is founded on the principles of ancient Mexican design revised and put into textbook form by Adolfo Best-Maugard, who originated the idea of teaching design to the Mexican children. Daring, freedom, harmony, self-possession mark the work of these children, who invent new combinations of the characteristic motifs of Aztec, Maya and Spanish design and arrive at an art expression of modern Mexico." "Art in the Public Schools," *Survey Graphic*, vol. 5 (May 1924), p. 171.

³⁰ In a letter to Frank Tannenbaum, Porter enumerated the "List of materials gathered for the Art Section of *Survey Graphic* Mexican number."

Among them are “Photographs of paintings of Adolfo Best-Maugard” and “Initial letters and tail piece decorations by Adolfo Best.” None of Best-Maugard’s paintings were published in the issue. Katherine Anne Porter to Frank Tannenbaum, 23 September 1923, folder 110:622, Survey Associates Records, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota.

³¹ His textbook is mentioned as an example of “nationalistic research” that changed the “spiritual atmosphere” in Mexico: “Adolfo Best Maugard’s study of the lineal elements and the canons of Mexican ancient and popular art.” Pedro Henriquez Ureña, “The Revolution in Intellectual Life,” *Survey Graphic*, vol. 5 (May 1924), p. 166.

³² “In the spread of artistic education we have gone straight to the people. We have obtained our pupils from the school children and from the laboring classes. We have opened night classes of drawing and we are establishing in all of the schools a method of teaching drawing according to the element of our national art. We have published and sent out about thirty thousand copies of this method of teaching drawing.” José Vasconcelos, “Educational Aspirations,” *Survey Graphic*, vol. 5 (May 1924), p. 169.

³³ About 1920, “Adolfo Best-Maugard, having devoted ten years to the study of ancient Mexican design, had founded an entire system of painting and teaching upon it, and was beginning the work of organizing the art departments of the public schools throughout the republic.” “Today all the painters are working, some as members of the syndicate, others as individuals. . . . The children of the schools are studying by the system devised and perfected by Best.” Diego Rivera, “The Guild Spirit in Mexican Art,” *Survey Graphic*, vol. 5 (May 1924), pp. 174, 178.

³⁴ Katherine Anne Porter, “Mexico,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (2-11-1924), p. 9.

³⁵ Katherine Anne Porter, “From a Mexican Painter’s Notebook,” *Arts*, vol. 7 (January 1925), p. 23.

³⁶ The political content of *Método de dibujo* resides in its preface, “La Funcion Social del Arte” by José Juan Tablada. The work closes with “Arte Mexicano”

by Secretary of Public Education Pedro Henriquez Ureña, which explains the origin of and adoption of Best-Maugard’s method in Mexico. Neither of these essays appears in *A Method for Creative Design*. I am indebted to María A. Walsh for providing a summary of *Método de dibujo*, enabling me to compare the two works.

³⁷ In a 1925 letter to Porter, Best-Maugard explicitly stated his intention, “I want this book to be absolutely American not mentioning anything connected with Mexico.” (Adolfo Best-Maugard to Katherine Anne Porter, after 10 August 1925, Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Series 1, Box 22, Best-Maugard, Adolfo, 1925, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.)

³⁸ Katherine Anne Porter, “The Great Catherine,” *Tribune New York Herald Books* (29-11-1925), p. 3. Porter’s drawing depicts Katharine Anthony, the author of the book reviewed.

³⁹ Katherine Anne Porter, “Quetzalcoatl,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (7-03-1926), p. 2; “A Singing Woman,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (18-04-1926), p. 6; “Everybody Is a Real One,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (16-01-1927), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Katherine Anne Porter, “Ay, Que Chamaco,” *New Republic*, vol. 45, (23-12-1925), pp. 141-42; “Quetzalcoatl,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (7-03-1926), pp. 1-2; “La Conquistadora,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (11-04-1926), pp. 3-4; “Enthusiast and Wildcatter,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (6-02-1927), p. 14; “Paternalism and the Mexican Problem,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (27-03-1927), p. 12; “Old Gods and New Messiahs,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (29-09-1929), pp. 1-2; “These Pictures Must Be Seen,” *New York Herald Tribune Books* (22-12-1929), pp. 5, 6. Best-Maugard is overtly mentioned in only one of these “Old Gods and New Messiahs”: “Adolfo Best-Maugard, who created a method of design based on Aztec motives, is Spanish-French, educated in Europe” (2).

⁴¹ Katherine Anne Porter, “Children and Art,” *Nation*, vol. 124 (2 March 1927), p. 233, 234.

⁴² Adolfo Best-Maugard, *A Method for Creative Design*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926, p. 110.

⁴³ Katherine Anne Porter, "He," *New Masses*, vol. 3, (October 1927), pp. 49-58.

⁴⁴ Katherine Anne Porter, "Magic," *transition*, vol. 13 (Summer 1928), pp. 229-231.

⁴⁵ Katherine Anne Porter, "Rope," in Alfred Kreymborg, Lewis Mumford, Paul Rosenfeld (eds.), *Second American Caravan*, New York, Macaulay, 1928, pp. 362-368.

⁴⁶ Katherine Anne Porter, "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall," *transition*, vol. 15 (February 1929), pp. 139-145.

⁴⁷ Katherine Anne Porter, "Theft," *Gyroscope*, (November 1929), unpag.

⁴⁸ Katherine Anne Porter, "Flowering Judas," *Hound & Horn*, vol. 3, (Spring 1930), pp. 316-331.

⁴⁹ The Harcourt, Brace contracts are dated March 1, and March 3, 1930, Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Series 4, Box 4, Contracts—(Harcourt, Brace, & Co.), 1930-1975, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

⁵⁰ Katherine Anne Porter, "Flowering Judas," in *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter*, New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1965, p. 101.

⁵¹ Adolfo Best-Maugard, "Masks," *Mexican Folkways*, vol. 5 (July-September 1929), p. 126.

⁵² In a letter to Matthew Josephson, Porter reported that she was sailing for Mexico on 26 April. Katherine

Anne Porter to Matthew Josephson, 21 April 1931, Matthew Josephson Papers, Series 1, Box 8, Porter, Katherine Anne, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

⁵³ "Leaving the Petate" was received at *New Republic* in November 1930. Katherine Anne Porter, "Leaving the Petate," *New Republic*, vol. 65, (4 February 1931), pp. 318-320.

⁵⁴ A photograph of Alexandrov, Tisse, and Eisenstein, dated "December 1930, Chichen Itza, Yucatán, Mexico" is among the photographs in Porter's papers, Papers of Katherine Anne Porter, Series 12, Box 4, ca. August 1930-March 1931, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries. Porter's 29 December 1930, letter to Josephine Herbst reports that "Eisenstein the Russian picture director is here with his camera man, and he is coming to dinner, and that should be pleasant." Katherine Anne Porter to Josephine Herbst, 29 December 1930, Josephine Herbst Papers, Series 1, Box 21, Porter, Katherine, 1927-1962, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

⁵⁵ Katherine Anne Porter, "Hacienda," in *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter*, New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1965, pp. 152, 158-59.

⁵⁶ Katherine Anne Porter, "History on the Wing," *New Republic*, vol. 89 (18 November 1936), p. 82; "Rivera's Personal Revolution in Mexico," *New York Herald Tribune*, "Books," (21-03-1937), p. 7; and "Mexico's Thirty Long Years of Revolution—A Story Told Simply and Effectively in Text and Photographs," *New York Herald Tribune*, "Book Review," (30-05-1943), pp 1-2.

⁵⁷ Katherine Anne Porter, "Introduction," in Angel Flores and Dudley Poore (eds.), *Fiesta in November—Stories from Latin America*, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, Doran, 1942; and "Introduction—Notes on the Life and Death of a Hero," in J. J. Fernandez Lizardi, *The Itching Parrot*, Garden City, NY, Doubleday, Doran, 1942.

⁵⁸ Katherine Anne Porter, "The Charmed Life," *Vogue*, vol. 99 (15 April 1942), pp. 45, 97; and "St. Augustine and the Bullfight" [originally published as "Adventure in Living"], *Mademoiselle*, vol. 41 (July 1955), pp. 28-34.



Katherine Anne Porter wearing "the China Poblana, Mexican National Dress," Cuernavaca, Mexico, Summer 1923. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 12, Box 2, Item 1308. Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

In Memoriam: E. Barrett Prettyman

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

"To E. Barrett Pettyman, Jr. Faithful friend, able and fearless counselor, gifted writer, and joyful company, who has guided me through a rain-forest in these past rather terrible years. Yet we can laugh together and we know what to laugh at." Dedication, *The Collected Essays and Occasional Writings of Katherine Anne Porter* (New York: Seymour Lawrence, 1970).

E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., a prominent Washington lawyer, died November 4, 2016, at the age of 91. He was born June 1, 1925, in Washington. His father was a chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit Court. Survivors include two children, E. Barrett "Ty" Prettyman III of Oakton, Virginia, and Jill Prettyman Lukoschek of Houston; and three grandsons.

Barrett Prettyman served in the Army in Europe during World War II, before attending Yale University from which he graduated in 1949. After two years as a newspaper reporter, he attended law school at the University of Virginia, where he became friends with a fellow student, Robert F. Kennedy. He received his law degree in 1953. From 1953 to 1955 he served as law clerk to three Supreme Court Justices: Robert H. Jackson, Felix Frankfurter, and John M. Harlan. In a memorandum to Justice Jackson, he successfully argued that Jackson's separate opinion would undercut the force of a unified ruling in the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

In 1955, Prettyman joined the Washington law firm of Hogan & Hartson, where he specialized in First Amendment and death-penalty cases and established the firm's appellate practice. He argued before the Supreme Court 19 times. In 1962, Mr. Prettyman successfully negotiated with Cuban leader Fidel Castro for the release of prisoners taken in the ill-fated Bay of Pigs operation. He subsequently served as a special assistant to U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and was an aide to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson from 1963 to 1964. In the early 1980s, Mr. Prettyman was special counsel

to the House Ethics Committee during the "Abscam" investigation, in which several congressmen were convicted of accepting bribes in an undercover FBI sting. In 1998 and 1999, Mr. Prettyman worked pro bono as inspector general of the District of Columbia, rooting out corruption in city agencies.

A published author himself, Mr. Prettyman was a collector of rare books and served as president from 1990 to 1993 of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation, which presents awards to writers. His *Death and the Supreme Court* (1961), a nonfiction study of legal cases involving the death penalty, won the Edgar Allan Poe Award for best factual crime book. Prettyman's famous clients, in addition to Katherine Anne Porter, included John Lennon and Truman Capote.

Prettyman contacted Porter in 1962 to express his admiration for her novel *Ship of Fools*. However, their personal relationship did not develop until he became her lawyer. At a dinner party in 1966, Supreme Court Justice John Harlan recommended Prettyman as someone who could help Porter write a new will. Their relationship blossomed into an intimate friendship marked by special meals Porter prepared for them. Her *Collected Essays* was dedicated to him, and he and his wife hosted a festive party celebrating the publication at the F Street Club in Spring 1970.



Katherine Anne Porter and Barrett Prettyman at breakfast, circa 1973-1974, Westchester Park Towers, College Park, Maryland. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 12, Box 38, Item 4070, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

Porter News from the University of Maryland Libraries

By Amber Kohl, University of Maryland

Since last reported to the society, there have been several new acquisitions to the Katherine Anne Porter papers and library. Three volumes of translations of plays by Euripides, *Medea*, *Electra*, and *Bacchae*, which were owned and signed by Katherine Anne Porter, were added to the book collection. Additionally, several letters and ephemeral items were acquired and incorporated into the archival collection. The letters were written by Katherine Anne Porter to Arthur Long, dated in the 1950s. In a long hand written note, dated 12 December 1958 and written from Martha Jefferson Hospital, Porter discusses her pneumonia as she is getting ready to leave the hospital so she could make several paid engagements on time. Her reasoning? “Why, to pay for the pneumonia of course and say nothing of emerald rings! And to think I ever dreamed of a white Thunderbird I saw here in a used car lot.”

Related to the Katherine Anne Porter papers, materials were recently donated to the Libraries related to Robert A. Beach, Jr., who served as Assistant to the President for University Relations at the University of Maryland. These materials include correspondence with Katherine Anne Porter and the Katherine Anne Porter Foundation, as well as photographs, clippings, and ephemera dated from the 1930s to the 1970s.

A new online exhibit showcasing digitized correspondence from the Libraries’ Katherine Anne Porter papers, Paul Porter papers, and Ann Heintze papers is in progress and will be completed in the upcoming months. The site will feature letters throughout the decades between Porter and members of her family, including Paul Porter, Jr., Gay Porter Hollaway, Ann Hollaway Heintze, Eugene Pressly, and Albert Erskine. The online exhibit will be a wonderful way to make the Katherine Anne Porter papers accessible to the public in an engaging and creative format. It is a product of the work completed for the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project, detailed in the May 2016 issue. More

information on the progress of the project appears in Caitlin Rizzo’s 2017 update.

Beth Alvarez, Curator of Literary Manuscripts Emerita at the University of Maryland, continues to staff the Katherine Anne Porter room during the fall and spring academic semesters on Wednesday afternoons. Tours were also available on Maryland Day, which saw hundreds of visitors stop by Hornbake Library for a variety of activities and exhibits hosted by Special Collections and University Archives. We are thrilled to continue to highlight these tours in our program as a way to promote the Katherine Anne Porter room and collections to the public.

All inquiries about the Libraries’ Katherine Anne Porter holdings should be directed to Amber Kohl, Acting Curator of Literature & Rare Books, at amberk@umd.edu, (301) 405-9214. Mailing address: 1202A Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Katherine Anne Porter Literary Trust

By Daniel C. Mack, Associate Dean for Collections, University of Maryland Libraries

It has been a busy few months at the University of Maryland Libraries as we continue to support scholarship about the works of Katherine Anne Porter. The Trust has been an active supporter of our ongoing endeavor to digitize and make available Porter’s correspondence. This ongoing project will make these important primary source documents available to scholars and fans of Porter from around the world.

The Libraries’ collaboration with Open Roads to publish a digital edition of Porter’s novel *Ship of Fools* has been quite successful. Sales have gone beyond what was expected, and the novel has been a featured work on Open Road’s website in several of their marketing campaigns during the past year. The Libraries’ very favorable terms for share of the royalties from this digital edition have continued to grow the dollar value of the Trust. This, in turn, augments our ability to support and promote Porter’s works.

Permission for use of the intellectual property residing in Porter's work continues to be handled by Fred Courtright of the Permissions Company, Inc., 47 Seneca Road, P.O. Box 604, Mount Pocono, PA 18344. Phone: 570-839-7477. Fax: 570-839-7448. Email: permdude@eclipse.net.

Last fall the Libraries hired Mary Dulaney as the new Director of Development. In this role Ms. Dulaney is responsible for fundraising, donor relations, and stewardship for the Libraries. She is working closely with Interim Dean Babak Hamidzadeh and Associate Dean Daniel Mack to raise awareness and increase support for our unique primary source collections in Special Collections and University Archives. Because they are the Libraries' premier literary collection, we are actively investigating new and exciting ways to support and promote Porter's works. We would love to hear your ideas!

As Trustee, the Libraries take very seriously our mandate to support preservation and interpretation of Porter's work for current and future generations. The Trust is always looking for new ideas from Porter fans and scholars! Please send your suggestions to Daniel Mack, Associate Dean for Collection Strategies and Services, University of Maryland Libraries, at dmack@umd.edu.

Updates from the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project

By Caitlin Rizzo, University of Maryland

This summer the University of Maryland Libraries will begin the third phase of the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project. The University of Maryland Special Collections and Digital Systems and Stewardship divisions launched the project in 2014 as an initiative to digitize thousands of letters from the University of Maryland Special Collections' Katherine Anne Porter holdings.

For the past three years, the University of Maryland Libraries' staff has been actively working on the digitization of the letters as well as the development of a new digital environment to enhance the public's ability to view the collection. Currently, we are working with the Digital Systems and Stewardship division to make phase one and two of the project

available in this new online environment. While we anticipated that the KAP Correspondence Project would be available to the public online as early as 2015, development of the digital environment continues to cause a delay. However, we are happy to announce that we will be launching an online exhibit for the project in summer 2017. The exhibit is being compiled by Amber Kohl and will provide the public with the project's highlights while development continues.

During the first and second phase of the project, over 3,000 Porter letters, greeting cards, postcards, and telegrams were digitized. These letters comprise over 6,000 pages of correspondence sent to Porter's family, confidants, and personal acquaintances. The third phase of the project will digitize Porter's correspondence documenting agents and publishing activities, derivative works, and financial and legal matters. The items will be drawn from Porter's papers as well as those of Cyrilly Abels, Seymour Lawrence, E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., and the Atlantic Monthly Press and will add over 2,500 pages of additional correspondence to the project.

This new batch of letters draws heavily from Porter's correspondence with her publishers, agents, and other publishing colleagues. In this round, we are digitizing Porter's correspondence to Cyrilly Abels, Seymour Lawrence, and Marcelle Sibon, among others. The letters also document Porter's correspondence with publishers, including the Atlantic Monthly Press, Delacorte, Double Day & Co., Little Brown & Co., Simon & Schuster, and the *New Yorker*. These letters offer Porter's insights into the publication of her work and reveal the extent of her involvement in the publication process. Among the derivative works documented is the 1965 adaptation of *Ship of Fools* as a motion picture. The financial and legal correspondence provides fascinating documentation of Porter's financial life as well as her extensive correspondence with her lawyer and intimate friend Barrett Prettyman.

In addition to the digitization of the letters, we are currently working to create enhanced metadata that allow researchers the ability to search and navigate these holdings. As part of these efforts, we continue to record data that helps to categorize these letters by recipient, date, location, and collection. This metadata will also ensure users can effectively search

and manipulate the letters and aggregate metadata according to these data points.

We are also taking advantage of innovations in digital preservation and display at the University of Maryland to provide access to the letters. The Libraries are developing a new interface to display digital collections currently stored in the Libraries' digital content repository, Fedora. The new interface will greatly enhance a user's ability to view, search, and manipulate the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence by utilizing powerful Apache Solr indexing. The interface will also make use of a Mirador International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF) image viewer to provide high quality images of digitized material. These will allow Web site users to compare images of the correspondence side by side as well as zoom to view close ups of the images of correspondence clearly.

We anticipate that the digital environment will debut later in 2017 and release of the online exhibit in summer 2017. The address of the online exhibit is <http://www.lib.umd.edu/kaporter-correspondence>. For more information on the project, please visit the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project Web site at: <http://digital.lib.umd.edu/kap>. We regularly share images and updates about the collection on the University of Maryland Special Collections blog and twitter account. You can find us at <https://hornbakelibrary.wordpress.com/> or follow us on Twitter at @HornbakeLibrary. We are also happy to answer questions about the project via e-mail. Questions can be directed to carizzo@umd.edu.

Caitlin Rizzo is a graduate assistant working on the KAP Correspondence Project. She is a first year Master of Library Science student at the University of Maryland iSchool with a specialization in Archives and Digital Curation.

Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center News

By Beth Alvarez, University of Maryland

The Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center at 508 Center Street in Kyle, Texas, serves as a venue for readings and talks by visiting writers, a museum, and a home for writers-in-residence. During the 2016-

2017 academic year, Ross Gay, Julia Pierpont, Mary Ruefle, Charles D'Ambrosio, Ada Limón, Elisa Albert, Stephen Dunn, and Marlon James gave readings at the center. The reading series is sponsored by Texas State University's Department of English, the Lindsey Literary Series, the Burdine Johnson Foundation, and the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center.

Texas State's MFA program publishes an on-line literary journal, *Front Porch* (<http://www.frontporchjournal.com>), which includes fiction, poetry, reviews, and nonfiction by emerging and established authors. Video of readings and Q&A sessions by distinguished writers who visit the KAP Literary Center are available and regularly updated on the *Front Porch* Web site.

The Writers-in-Residence at the KAP House since 2008 include Michael Noll, Katie Angermeier, and Jeremy Garrett. Funded by the Burdine Johnson Foundation, the Writer-in-Residence lives in the house and acts as curator of the museum, and the coordinator of the visiting writers series. The Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center is open to visitors and school groups by appointment. To arrange a visit, email kapliterarycenter@gmail.com or call (512) 268-6637.

Updated Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center information appears at <http://www.kapliterarycenter.com/>. Inquiries concerning Texas State's MFA in Creative Writing can be made through the program's Web site (<http://www.english.txstate.edu/mfa/>), via email at mfinearts@txstate.edu, or by phone at (512) 245-7681.

The Year's Work on Katherine Anne Porter: 2015-2016

By Christine Grogan, Penn State University

In 2015-2016, Katherine Anne Porter's fiction continued to elicit insightful commentary. These included seven scholarly articles that discuss Katherine Anne Porter's work, two of which were published internationally (in Romania and Turkey).

To compile this bibliography, which annotates

scholarship on Porter published in 2015-2016, I searched the *MLA International Bibliography* and *Academic Search Complete* (formerly called *Academic Search Premier*), using the term “Porter, Katherine Anne.” To find dissertations, I searched *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*, using the term “Porter, Katherine Anne,” limiting the search to “abstract.” I did not include material that contained only passing reference of Porter, and my annotations summarize instead of evaluate.

Please send information on any additions that need to be made to this bibliography to Christine Grogan at clg5579@psu.edu so that I may include the information in next year’s newsletter.

In “Writing ‘Other Spaces’: Katherine Anne Porter’s Yaddo,” *Modernism/modernity* 22.4 (2015): 735-57, Kathryn S. Roberts discusses the role of Yaddo in the early twentieth century to offer a revisionist expatriate narrative. Although Paris is often viewed as the literary hub of modernism, the writing colony of Yaddo also was integral to the American modernist story. Roberts focuses on Porter, a frequent resident of Yaddo yet whose fiction composed while living there “is set among the hotels and cafés of Europe and abroad a ship destined for those spaces.” Unlike Gertrude Stein and others who lived abroad and were surprised by the German invasion, Porter’s late fiction, namely “The Leaning Tower” and *Ship of Fools*, shows an author who knows that Europe is on the brink of another war. Yaddo granted Porter a vantage point from which a separation from the world led to greater perspective on its events.

Corinne Andersen, in “‘Instantly Upon this Thought the Dreadful Vision Faded’: The False Epiphany of Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘The Grave,’” *South Central Review* 33.3 (2016): 1-17, argues against those critics who have read “The Grave” as having a positive ending. Andersen maintains that “Miranda does not triumph at the end”; instead, the ending “underscores Miranda’s chronic melancholia.” Engaging Freud and LaCapra, Andersen states that Miranda is locked in compulsive repetition. She captures her argument succinctly in the closing paragraph: “However one views the end of ‘The Grave,’ as a recognition of the power of patriarchy or as a reconciliation between siblings, it does not provide the type of critical judgment which suggests that Miranda has learned to live with the trauma of her past. Although Miranda’s

‘dreadful vision’ of the hunt has temporarily faded, it will return.”

To interpret Porter’s portrayal of death, Kodai Iuchi explores the three stories of *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider* in “Katherine Anne Porter’s Faithful and Relentless Vision of Death in *Pale Horse*, *Pale Rider*,” *The Southern Quarterly* 53.1 (2015): 153-70. He charts the evolution of Porter’s views on death, starting with “Old Mortality,” in which Miranda mistakenly learns that “only tragic death can grant one perfection.” “Noon Wine,” which seemingly interrupts Miranda’s story, depicts death as “horrific, unavoidable, perpetuating totality.” But in the last couple of paragraphs of “Pale Horse, Pale Rider,” as a result of Miranda’s near-death experience, Porter presents a character who no longer romanticizes death but embraces life. Iuchi qualifies this progression, however, by calling it a cycle and stating that Miranda could revert to a self-indulgent and glorified view of death.

Iuchi’s article notes that in “Old Mortality,” “Miranda grows up with no proper sense of the real... horrors of the Civil War.” Janis Stout addresses the topic of the Civil War in “Daughter of a War Lost, Won, and Evaded: Cather and the Ambiguities of the Civil War,” *Cather Studies* 10 (2015): 133-49. Although mainly concerned with Willa Cather’s ambivalence of the Civil War, her article opens and closes by briefly comparing Cather with Porter. Unlike Porter who was firmer in her Southern heritage and characterized herself as “the grandchild of a lost War,” Cather, who “spent her early years in a geographical borderland and grew up in an extended family of conflicted loyalties,” remained unclear regarding her affiliations. Stout argues that this is most evident in *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*. In her closing, Stout says that the Civil War’s legacy informed both writers’ fiction and served as lessons in “the nuances of ambivalence.”

In “The Ethics of Intervention: US Writers and the Mexican Revolution,” *Journal of American Studies* 50.3 (2016): 613-38, Kimberly O’Neill focuses on John Kenneth Turner, John Reed, and Katherine Anne Porter, “the era’s best-known correspondents,” whose writings about the Mexican Revolution invited “the US public to imagine themselves as participants in a new hemispheric democracy rather than as citizens of an empire threatened by the uprising of its

province.” She states that whereas Turner and Reed both attempt to use their position as reporters to transcend it, which neither fully accomplishes, Porter, particularly in “Hacienda,” “presents a writer whose reflexivity corrects [Turner’s and Reed’s] lack of reflection,” even though that contemplation might lead to political inertia.

The two international articles investigate how Porter portrays female identity. Nilay Erdem Ayyildiz and F. Gül Koçsoy compare the female characters of “Theft” and “Flowering Judas” in “The Ordeal of Urban Women in Search for Identity in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Theft’ and ‘Flowering Judas,’” *Firat University Journal of Social Sciences* 25.2 (2015): 93-102. They argue that Porter depicts these female characters as fully developed women who attempt to move from object to subject amidst a patriarchal society that too often defines their identity. Oana-Raisa Stoleriu, in “Strings of Life: Memory as Myth in Porter’s Miranda Stories,” *Romanian Journal of English Studies* 13.1 (2016): 53-60, asserts that through Miranda’s memories, Porter questions some of the major Southern myths. As a result, Porter shows female identity as straddling the old and new order.



Katherine Anne Porter seated at a pre-Columbian site, possibly Cuernavaca, Mexico, circa April 1930-August 1931, Mexico. Katherine Anne Porter Papers, Series 12, Box 2, Item 1337, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Maryland Libraries.

American Academy of Arts and Letters: Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature, 2016

By Christine Grogan, Penn State University

On May 18, 2016, Kathryn Davis received the Katherine Anne Porter Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters at the Academy’s annual Ceremonial in New York City, an event attended by Beth Alvarez and Christine Grogan. The members of the 2016 Awards Committee were John Guare, Sharon Olds, Anne Tyler, Rosanna Warren, and Joy Williams.

Katherine Anne Porter was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1941 and to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1966. In 2001, the Literary Trust of Katherine Anne Porter established the Katherine Anne Porter biennial award in literature in the amount of \$20,000 to honor a fiction writer in mid-career “whose achievements and dedication to the literary profession have been demonstrated.”

The past recipients were Lynn Freed in 2002, Nicholson Baker in 2004, Arturo Vivante in 2006, John Edgar Wideman in 2008, Tim O’Brien in 2010, Maureen Howard in 2012, and Sherman Alexie in 2014.

Annie Proulx presented the award to Davis, with the Ceremonial citation stating, “Horror, history, the spiritual and the fairy tale all illuminate the paths taken in the complex and varied narratives of Kathryn Davis’ seven novels. A dedicated and inventive craftsman, she is also an inspiring teacher of writing, devoted to helping students find their own voice.”

Davis’s seven novels are titled *Labrador* (1988), *The Girl Who Trod on a Loaf* (1993), *Hell* (1998), *The Walking Tour* (2000), *The Thin Place* (2006), *Versailles: A Novel* (2013), and *Duplex: A Novel* (2013). In a preface to a 2003 interview, Jessa Crispin writes, “Kathryn Davis is a relatively obscure author, although she doesn’t deserve to be. Part of it may be her relatively intimidating choice of topics: the history of opera, the French Revolution,

Napoleon's chef, Welsh myth." Added to that list is her theme of women's domestic lives.

A senior fiction writer in the Writing Program in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, Davis taught at Skidmore College. She now lives in Montpelier, Vermont.

Prior to receiving the Katherine Anne Porter Award, Davis was the recipient of the Janet Heidiger Kafka Prize, the Morton Dauwen Zabel Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1999, a 2000 Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Lannan Literary award for Fiction in 2006.

Katherine Anne Porter Society Activities at the 2016 American Literature Association Conference

The Katherine Anne Porter Society's panels at the 27th American Literature Association annual conference took place on Saturday, May 28, 2016, in San Francisco. Jerry Findley chaired both sessions, the first of which entitled "Katherine Anne Porter—Texas, Southern, Cosmopolitan" featured the following three papers: Linda Kornasky's "'All this Dust and Welter' of Texas: Dorothy Scarborough's *The Wind* and Katherine Anne Porter's *Noon Wine*," Elizabeth DePriest's "The Patriarchal Family in Katherine Anne Porter's Reproductive Modernism," and Joseph Kuhn's "A 'Slowly Darkening Decade': The 1930s in the Political Imagination of Katherine Anne Porter." In our second session, titled "Katherine Anne Porter and the Influence of Internationalism and Universalism," we heard three essays: Beth Alvarez's "Mexican Artist Adolfo Best-Maugard's Influence on the Art and the Aesthetics of Katherine Anne Porter" (a shortened version of the essay reproduced in this issue), Darlene Unrue's "Hegelian Discourse in Katherine Anne Porter's World War Fiction," and Jeffrey Lawrence's "Why She Wrote about Mexico: Katherine Anne Porter and the Literature of Experience."

Our business meeting followed the session and addressed topics such as the balance in the treasury, current membership, the Society's newsletter and Web site. Beth Alvarez reported that Jonathan and Ceile Zorach recently donated to the University of Maryland Libraries Porter's copies of three volumes of translations of plays by Euripides, which Porter dated 1922, and that Amber Kohl is now the University of Maryland Libraries' staff member whose responsibilities include the Libraries' KAP holdings and other literary manuscripts.

2018 American Literature Association Conference in San Francisco

The Katherine Anne Porter Society session at the 29th annual American Literature Association conference will be chaired by Dr. Christine Grogan of Penn State. The topic of the session will be "Katherine Anne Porter: A Woman of Letters." In light of the Katherine Anne Porter Correspondence Project, which is digitizing thousands of pages of Porter's correspondence to family, friends, and others, this session topic invites papers about Porter as a letter writer or Porter as a writer. Please email proposals of 250 words or less to Dr. Grogan at clg5579@psu.edu. The deadline for submissions is December 15, 2017. The conference will take place May 24-27, in San Francisco, California. Conference details and information about hotel reservations will be available through the Web site of the American Literature Association. Information about the Porter activities planned for the conference will be posted on the society's Web site.