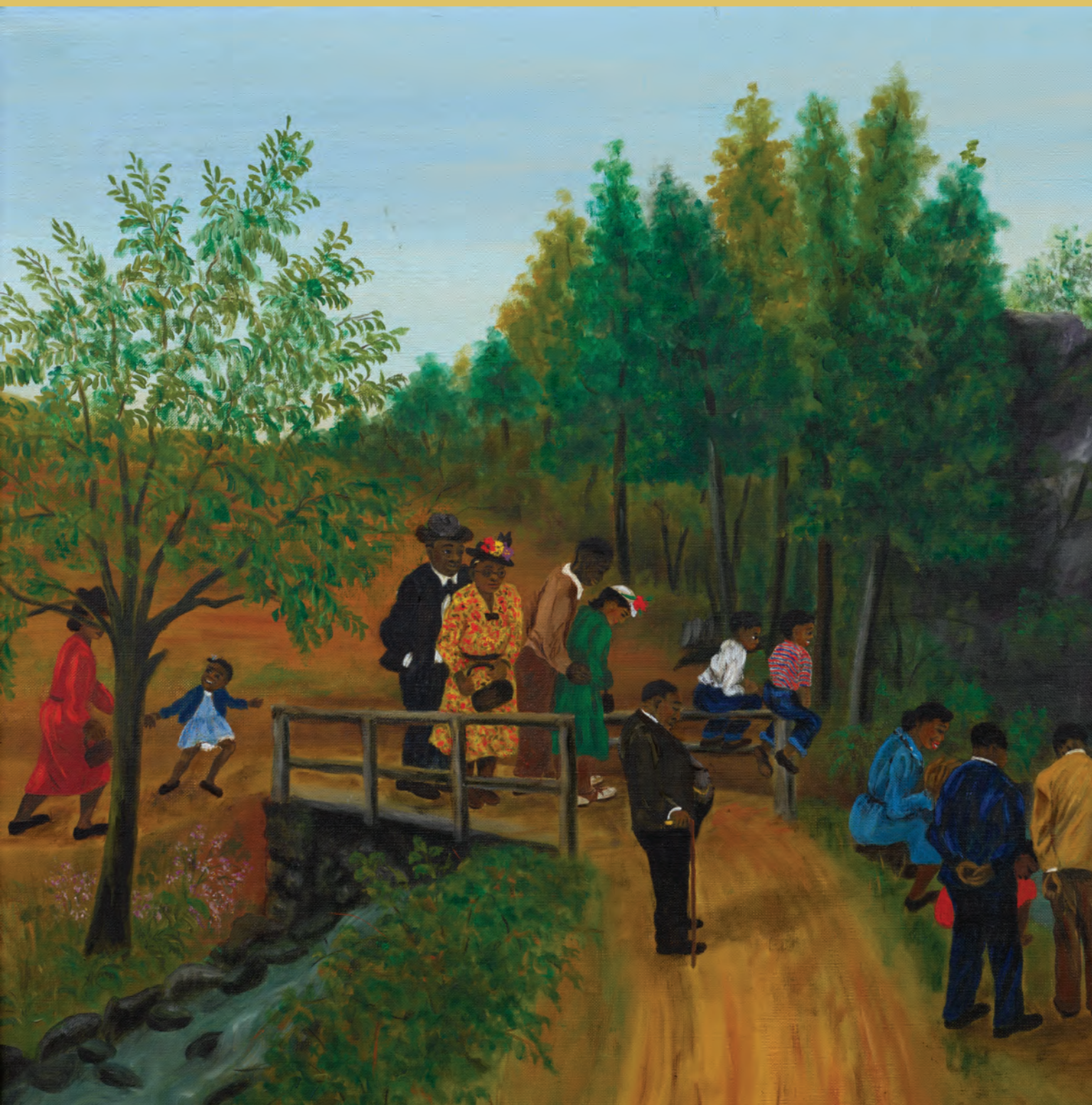
Queena Stovall

(1887–1980)

Paintings of a Country Life



Debra Force FINE ART, INC.

Queena Stovall

(1887–1980)

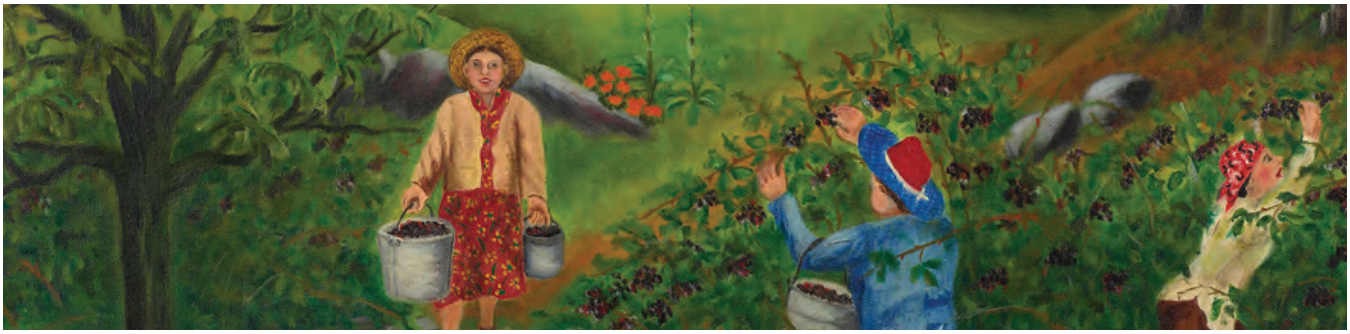
Paintings of a Country Life

January 20–February 21, 2020

ESSAY BY
ELLEN SCHALL AGNEW

FRONT COVER
The Baptising, signed *Queena Stovall* and dated *March, 1951*, lower right
oil on canvas, 24 × 32¼ in. (detail)

BACK COVER
Saturday Night Bath, signed *Queena Stovall* and dated *April, 1951*, lower right
oil on canvas, 18 1/8 × 24 1/8 in. (detail)



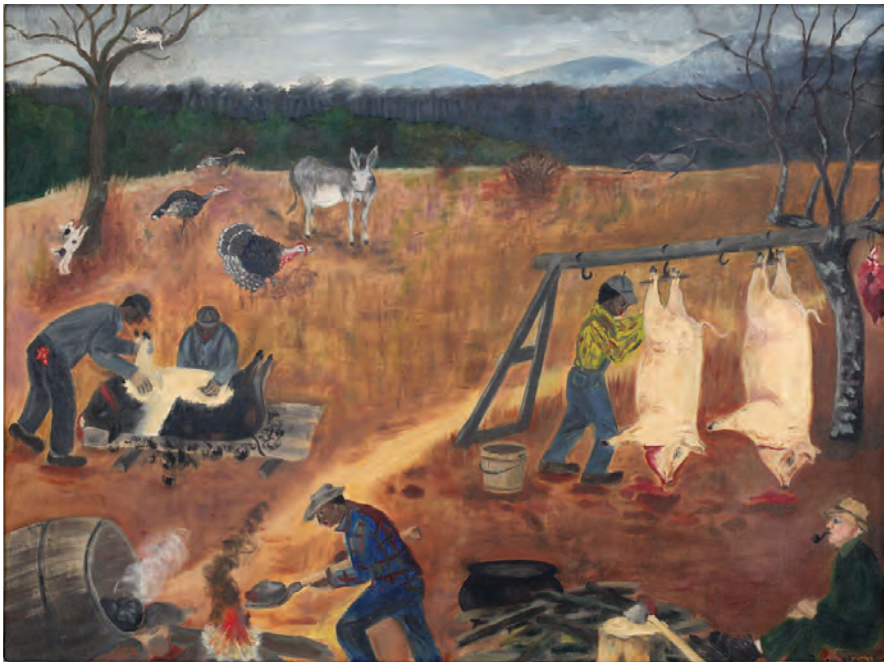
Queena Stovall, 1956, carrying spring onions from her garden at the Wigwam, for a buffet supper she hosted following her solo exhibition at the Lynchburg Art Center, Lynchburg, Virginia
PHOTO COURTESY OF
STOVALL FAMILY PAPERS

ABOVE
Blackberry Picking, signed *Queena Stovall* and dated *July, 1950,* lower right
oil on canvas, 18 × 24 in. (detail)

Many descriptors have been used for Queena Stovall (1887–1980) as an artist: primitive, naive, genre painter, self-taught, American Scene painter, folk artist, memory painter, and, even, landscape painter. The charm and challenge when considering the body of work that she completed in her twenty-year span as a painter, is whether or not these monikers apply. Stovall's paintings are deeply personal reflections of her life and experiences as a self-professed "country woman" in rural Virginia. They document the hardships of endless, life-sustaining farm chores as well as the joys of family and community rituals without sentimentality or idealization. Instead, the artist meticulously details the activities and human interactions that were central to her life and being. They are technically sophisticated and painted with an inherent knowledge of composition, color, and dynamic movement.

Stovall painted her first oil in 1949 at age sixty-two and her last complete work in 1967 at eighty. Of her forty-nine paintings, twenty-nine of them were produced in 1950 and 1951. Her discovery came ten years after that of famed folk artist Grandma Moses (1860–1961) in 1939, and at the cusp of dramatic changes in the art world with Non-Objective art gaining notoriety and popularity. Stovall's emergence is sandwiched between Moses' bucolic New England scenes, which satisfied nostalgic yearnings post-Depression and during World War II, and the world's changing social, political, and economic order afterward. Stovall was an artist who worked outside the mainstream structure of formal academic training, art galleries, and museums. In this light, it is a testament to her own independence, self-sufficiency, tenacity, dedication to her craft, and clarity of artistic vision that she produced such a strong and even body of work and came into her own as an artist.

Emma Serena Dillard (nicknamed "Queena" in her childhood) was born in rural Campbell County, Virginia, in 1887, the seventh of twelve children. She grew up and went to school in nearby Lynchburg, where at 21, she married Jonathan Breckenridge "Brack" Stovall, twelve years her senior. Her world revolved around family and farming, as Brack's work as a traveling salesman often left Queena at home alone and in charge. In 1945, the couple moved permanently to a farm called the Wigwam in Elon, at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Amherst County, Virginia, where they raised their eight children, and where she recorded on canvas the rural life, labors, activities, and people surrounding her. Stovall's ties to the land, to her neighbors, friends, and family, and to the seasonal and daily



Queena Stovall (1887–1980), *Hog Killing,* December 1949, oil on canvas board, 17 7/8 × 23 7/8 in.
COLLECTION OF LOUIS B. BASTEN III

routines of hog killing, blackberry picking, baptisms, and Saturday night baths were her touchstones and became the inspiration for her paintings.

Stovall was "discovered" in 1949 by esteemed Spanish-American artist and teacher Pierre Daura (1896–1976), who quickly recognized her innate artistic abilities in an art class that fall at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg. For Stovall's first class assignment to paint a picture of what Christmas means, she presented *Hog Killing*. The artist herself said, "Lord, the only thing Christmas means to me is hog killing. Everybody in the country has to have a little fresh meat."[1] When Daura told her not to touch the canvas, she mistakenly thought that he meant that there was not anything that she could do to help it. Instead, Daura immediately recognized "a seriousness in her work," as he said, and thereafter encouraged her to keep painting, but to refrain from taking any further art instruction. In describing Stovall, Daura stated:

That there is innocence and candor in [her painting], *there is no doubt…. But…said innocence and candor are direct reflections of the deep love and understanding of the people and the subject Mrs. Stovall paints. She so thoroughly identifies herself with her subject matter that her knowledge of it makes it easy for her to see it in form, in color. She sees it so well that she finds in herself the skill, the technique she needs to put it on canvas. She finds in her own logic the principles of composition we seek in books. Her color is very sensitive, not as an impressionist exactly, but as a plein-air painter…. There is a seriousness in her work…that struck me at once, from the very beginning.*[2]

In October 1950, Stovall met artist, teacher, and lecturer Grant Reynard (1887–1968), who was an admired illustrator, printmaker, and painter with strong ties to the art world, having studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, exhibited widely in New York in the 1930s–1940s, traveled throughout the United State speaking about art at colleges and museums, and served as President of the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey.[3] Upon seeing her initial paintings, Reynard was astonished by Stovall's artistic abilities:

I have never seen an artist in all my travels and in teaching and observing artists for all these years whose work was so thrilling and surprising in its character and originality…. You have something so much your own, so beautifully honest an expression of things you love that it is distinctive and utterly captivating…. Just paint the things that you know and love, the life around you that you feel and see…. I don't know of any person painting anywhere today who is putting down the record of a place and time such as you are there on the farm.[4]

From this initial exchange, a close and lasting friendship grew, with Reynard championing and promoting Stovall's work throughout her life. In the spring of 1951, he arranged to have her paintings seen in New York by Antoinette Kraushaar (1902–1992) at the prestigious Kraushaar Galleries. The gallerist was impressed with Stovall's work and agreed to represent her.[5]

Stovall's representation at Kraushaar Galleries from 1951–1956 secured her role as a professional artist. Kraushaar considered her a co-equal to other gallery artists, including her work in a group exhibition in October 1951. That fall, Reynard wrote to Stovall saying, "I was in at the Kraushaar Galleries yesterday to see their fall showing of artists on their regular list and on entering the main exhibition room found to my delight that your Baptism painting [pp. 6–7] was hanging right at the side of a large central painting smack in the center of

the wall and a top place in the show."[6] Further, a review of that same show mentions Stovall:

The new exhibition of paintings at the Kraushaar gallery that has just opened with about thirty works presents this season's first survey of the gallery group. As these are deployed with some breadth of taste, as to impressionist and abstract themes, there is room for choice between the sparklingly patterned realistic landscape of Gifford Beal, on the one hand, and an austerely decorative abstraction of Kenneth Evett's large Trio on the other…. Realism in Queena Stovall's charming, naive Baptism also figures, with gayety, … to give this group a varied, pleasant appeal.[7]

From 1951 to 1956, close to two dozen letters were exchanged between Kraushaar and Stovall, and more than twenty paintings were shipped back and forth between Lynchburg and New York. Three paintings were purchased by Alfred Corning Clark II, a member of the Singer Sewing Machine Company dynasty, and a fourth was acquired by Helen Farr Sloan, artist, philanthropist, and the second wife of American artist John Sloan.

In May of 1980, just a month before Stovall died, Kraushaar was interviewed for an article on Stovall:

I was not deeply interested in naive art…. It was unusual for me to step into it, but those early paintings that I saw were beautiful.

The way she used color and caught the mood, the time of day, the seasons, and the land was extraordinary. I liked her things much better than I did those of Grandma Moses, whose work was charming, but a little untouched by emotion.

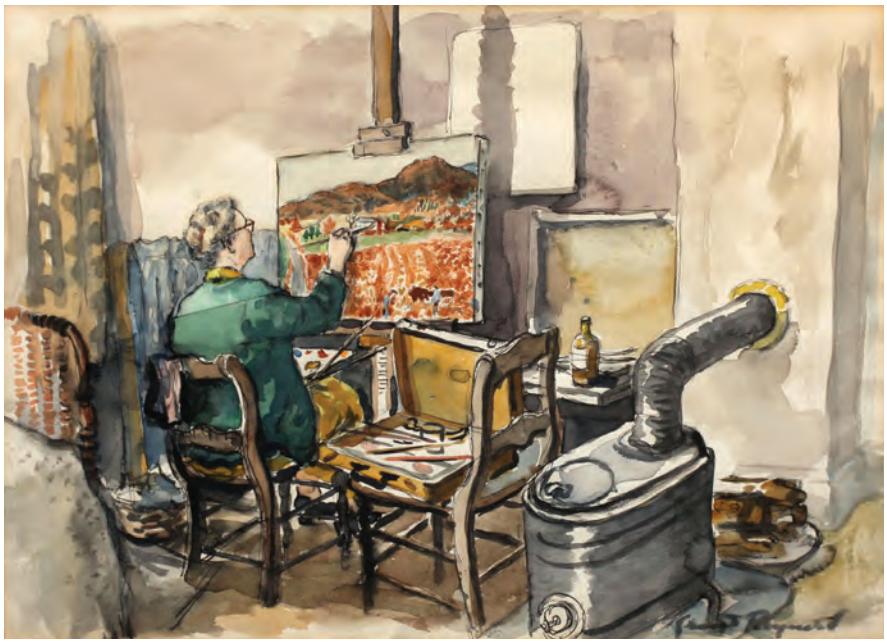
Queena Stovall's work was more painterly. I imagine one would say that I'm very romantic, and I responded to it.[8]

Kraushaar's role in Stovall gaining a foothold in the New York art world and art market cannot be overstated. The exposure Stovall's paintings received, while hanging in the company of works by renowned artists and being sold through an established and well-respected gallery in one of the most important art centers in the world, brought significant recognition to the rural Virginia artist.

While Stovall never travelled to New York to see her paintings at Kraushaar Galleries, she frequently welcomed, invited, and even urged Kraushaar and others from outside her world to visit, stay, and experience first-hand her life in the country. In part, this was ingrained Southern hospitality, but it was also a means by which she hoped those from beyond her sphere would better understand her art and appreciate the sources of her inspiration. She both sought and struggled to straddle these two very different worlds, the life of a professional artist and the life of a self-professed "country woman." By day, she ran a farm to support herself and her family financially, hosting large gatherings at her home several times a week; by night, she painted in the quiet of her studio bedroom to satisfy herself.

The relationships Stovall developed with Daura, Reynard, and Kraushaar set the stage for her inclusion in exhibitions from the late 1950s through the early 1970s. Reynard, in fact, treated her like a peer, even suggesting in the later years of their friendship that they exchange works of art. He wrote in a letter from 1964:

… I came across a painting which I made of you at work in your bed room studio on one of my trips down to Virginia and I am sending it to you as I think you and your family should own it as a family item from one artist to another…. It has seemed odd to me that over all the years of your painting… that we have never exchanged work. I have traded work with many well-known painters—John Marin, Jerome Myers, Edward Hopper, John Sloan, and a long list of artists but I don't have one by Queena Stovall. I would love to have one. Let me know—as the [Montclair] *museum is going to give an exhibition of the work which I own by distinguished artists and I want you to be included….*[9]



Grant Reynard (1887–1968), Queena Stovall painting *Harvest under Tobacco Row* in her bedroom studio, circa 1950, watercolor on paper, 9¾ × 14¼ in.
COLLECTION OF JUDY (STOVALL) BOLAND AND BILL BOLAND

In March 1959, the Seventeenth Biennial Exhibition of Virginia artists at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA), *Virginia Artists 1959*, debuted. Of the 1,085 entries submitted, 154 works were selected for exhibition, and Stovall was one of four artists whose work was chosen by the jury for purchase by the VMFA [*Baptizing—Pedlar River*, 1957].[10] At the award ceremony, jury chairman Dr. Sherman E. Lee, Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, paid tribute to Stovall in his slide presentation. An article commented on Lee's presentation: "The paintings were projected on an enormous screen and the first to be shown was a slide of Mrs. Stovall's work which the lecturer compared with *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks, one of America's best known primitive painters. He [Lee] lauded Mrs. Stovall's work saying that it possessed rare qualities and was more outstanding than the work of Grandma Moses."[11] Another article concluded with details of the award ceremony. "Later in the evening, Mrs. Stovall stood on the museum theater stage as an official handed her a check for her painting and said, "People may call her the 'Grandma Moses of Virginia,' but we of the museum think the other painter should be called the Grandma Stovall of New York."[12]

Across the arc of a decade, beginning with Stovall's success in New York in the early 1950s to solo and group exhibitions through the early 1960s, when her output ended, the lens through which Stovall's art was seen and the language of art itself had shifted. With the emergence of Abstract Expressionism and other Contemporary art forms as well as simultaneous social and cultural changes, Stovall's imagery was increasingly seen as nostalgic. In 1972, she met Dr. Louis C. Jones (1908–1990) and Agnes Halsey Jones (1914–2006). Louis Jones, Executive Director at the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York, and his wife Agnes traveled for a year throughout North America to research, photograph, and record folk art through a National Endowment for the Humanities grant.[13]

That same year, Stovall was eighty-five years old, had finished her last complete painting five years earlier, and had suffered several health setbacks. In addition, she was almost ten years removed from the artistic awards she had earned and the public accolades she had garnered. Thus, her discovery or "rediscovery" by the Joneses became a renaissance of sorts for Stovall and one that brought renewed enthusiasm for and new perspectives on her art.

Both Joneses were scholars, writers and teachers of American folklore.[14] From that initial meeting with the artist, Louis Jones conceptualized and then spent more than a year organizing a three-venue exhibition and a catalogue of forty-one of her paintings, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.[15] The Joneses' belief in the importance of Stovall's work was evidenced by the fact that she was the only individual artist they ever researched and presented in the form of a solo exhibition throughout their forty-year career.

In the exhibition catalogue introduction, the Joneses admiringly describe Stovall's art as well as the artist, saying, "a painting becomes a brilliant essay on folk ways and customs, seen from the viewpoint of the participant." They further noted that Stovall's description of herself—"I am a country woman"—was "a key to these very human documents, beautiful and warm. She always painted what was around her, what she could see, not what she remembered out of her past. She is one of a very active body of contemporary naives, in this country and abroad, all of whom work outside the artistic movements of their times and more or less isolated from other artists."[16]

With the exhibition and catalogue, Stovall's direct association with the folk-art tradition was established and would henceforth persist throughout the rest of her life. Articles would describe Stovall as a "contemporary folk artist," "American folk artist," and, simply, "folk artist." It is a label and a role that Stovall seemed to grow comfortable with as she neared the end of her life.

In 1979, at ninety-one, Stovall was interviewed and filmed for a PBS special titled *Three American Folk Painters*, which aired in 1983.[17] In the segment on Stovall, sub-titled "Queena Stovall: Life's Narrow Space," the artist said, "I've had a wonderful life. No money, but enough to live on. Now, I've painted most everything. And I think I've had my share of sorrows, but through it all it's been peace and a happiness that I think few people have had."[18]

Stovall's relationship with Louis and Agnes Jones, while beginning as a professional one, evolved into a deep and lasting friendship, just as it had with Pierre Daura, Grant Reynard, and, even to some degree, Antoinette Kraushaar. In each case, it was Stovall and her life as represented in her paintings that drew people to her and held them in her universe. From her initial sense of wonder and awe at being accepted as a true artist, to her confidently exhibiting her paintings in urban art galleries and museums, she ended her career enjoying the attention due an artist, folk or otherwise, who had lived a full life and expressed herself completely.

The Joneses' description of the beginning of their friendship with Stovall is, perhaps, an apt way to bring full circle her evolution as an artist, since throughout her life, everything of importance always began and ended at home.

The first time we saw Queena Stovall she stepped off the front porch of her farmhouse in Elon, Virginia, to greet us. She seemed tiny, but straight and firm. She laughed her greeting. We'd come to see her paintings, to talk to her about them. With a characteristic mixture of diffidence, humor and marrow-deep confidence she talked, she brought out some of her canvases, she told us stories about them. She laughed at herself. Two of her daughters were there; there was homemade wine and cake; we walked outside to the barns and outbuildings with the long line of the Blue Ridge rising behind them. When we drove off in the direction of Lynchburg, we were leaving an old friend.[19]

Although many different descriptors have been used in the past for Stovall as an artist, what has remained constant through the decades to the present is appreciation and admiration for her art and astonishment at what she achieved with no formal training and in such a short period of time. In her bedroom studio at night, she would start her paintings with a vivid mental image and see a painting in her mind's eye before she began. Stovall said that she could never paint something that she had not experienced or that did not interest her. The resultant visual narratives, laid to canvas and teaming with life and movement, chronicle the seasonal activities of a country farm and portray family, friends, and neighbors, whose presence imbue each painting with warmth and intimacy.

Perhaps now, labels don't matter. Perhaps today, "Queena Stovall, artist," is enough.

—ELLEN SCHALL AGNEW
Independent Curator

NOTES

1 Guy Friddell, "Artist Paints a Bittersweet World," *Richmond News Leader*, January 22, 1975.
2 Pierre Daura, letter to Martha Adams, July 13, 1950.
3 Gary Zaruba, *Selected Works from the Grant Reynard Collection*, October 16–November 11, 1983 (Kearney, Nebraska: Classical Graphics, Inc., 1983), p. 9.
4 Grant Reynard, letter to Queena Stovall, December 16, 1950, Stovall Family Papers.
5 Grant Reynard, letter to Queena Stovall, June 11, 1951, Stovall Family Papers.
6 Grant Reynard, letter to Queena Stovall, October 24, 1951, Grant Tyson Reynard Collection—Archives, Museum of Nebraska Art, Kearney, Nebraska, Gift of Jane Wilcox.
7 "Kraushaar Group," *New York Herald Tribune*, October 28, 1951, section 4, p. 6.
8 Guy Friddell, "Queena Stovall, Folk Artist," *Commonwealth, The Magazine of Virginia* (May 1980), vol. 47, no. 5, p. 35.
9 Grant Reynard, letter to Queena Stovall, August 25, 1964, Stovall Family Papers. Stovall's *Feeding Time* (1956) was exhibited in *Paintings, Prints, and Drawings from the Grant Reynard Collection* at the Montclair Art Museum, January 17– February 7, 1965.
10 *Richmond News Leader*, February 19, 1959.
11 *Daily Advance, Lynchburg, Va.*, April 12, 1959. Another article referencing Lee's comments at the award ceremony stated a different interpretation, saying his comparison of Stovall to Hicks was "to prove that *Baptising* [sic] was not really a primitive but a very knowingly painted and sophisticated picture." (John D. Longaker, *Richmond Times Dispatch*, April 19, 1959.)
12 Mary Moore Mason, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, April 11, 1959. Claudine Weatherford notes that Stovall disliked being compared to Grandma Moses. An apology letter from the VMFA's Nancy St. Clair Talley to Queena Stovall dated April 17, 1959, reads, "I regret… that our local press notice did not please you…. I apologize…. Now that we know that you don't like the inevitable 'Grandma Moses' tag,…we shall try to avoid it at the Museum and in print." Claudine Weatherford, *The Art of Queena Stovall, Images of Country Life* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1986), p. 143.
13 *The News, Lynchburg, Va.*, September 24, 1974.
14 Collection Research Files, Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, New York.
15 Louis Jones was quoted in an undated newspaper article from October 1974 that "this is the first time that an American artist of the naive school has been honored by the National Endowment for the Arts by the Federal Government." The exhibition, *Queena Stovall: Artist of the Blue Ridge*, travelled to Lynchburg College (now the University of Lynchburg), Lynchburg, VA; Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection (now Museum), Colonial Williamsburg, Williamsburg, VA; and the New York State Historical Association, Fenimore House (now Fenimore Museum of Art), Cooperstown, NY.
16 Louis C. Jones and Agnes Halsey Jones, *Queena Stovall, Artist of the Blue Ridge Piedmont* (Cooperstown, New York: New York State Historical Association, 1974), p. 5.
17 The other two artists included in the film were Mario Sanchez of Key West, FL, and Ralph Fasanella of New York, NY.
18 Transcript, interview with Queena Stovall taped September 8, 1979, "Queena Stovall: Life's Narrow Space," produced and directed by Jack Ofield in 1983, New Pacific Productions.
19 Louis C. Jones and Agnes Halsey Jones, *Queena Stovall, Artist of the Blue Ridge Piedmont* (Cooperstown, New York: New York State Historical Association, 1974), p. 4.

In 2018, the exhibition, *Inside Looking Out: The Art of Queena Stovall*, brought together forty-four of Stovall's forty-nine paintings. Organized by the Daura Gallery at the University of Lynchburg in Lynchburg, Virginia, the exhibition traveled to the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond, Virginia. With permission, this essay is excerpted and adapted from co-curator Ellen Schall Agnew's exhibition catalogue essay, "Farm to Easel: Queena Stovall's Evolution as an Artist."

The Baptising

signed *Queena Stovall* and dated *March, 1951*, lower right
oil on canvas, 24 × 32¼ in.

PROVENANCE

The artist
[Kraushaar Galleries, New York]
Alfred Corning Clark II, New York, acquired directly from the above
Jean Sinclair Tailer, Palm Beach, Florida
By descent through the family to the present owner

EXHIBITED

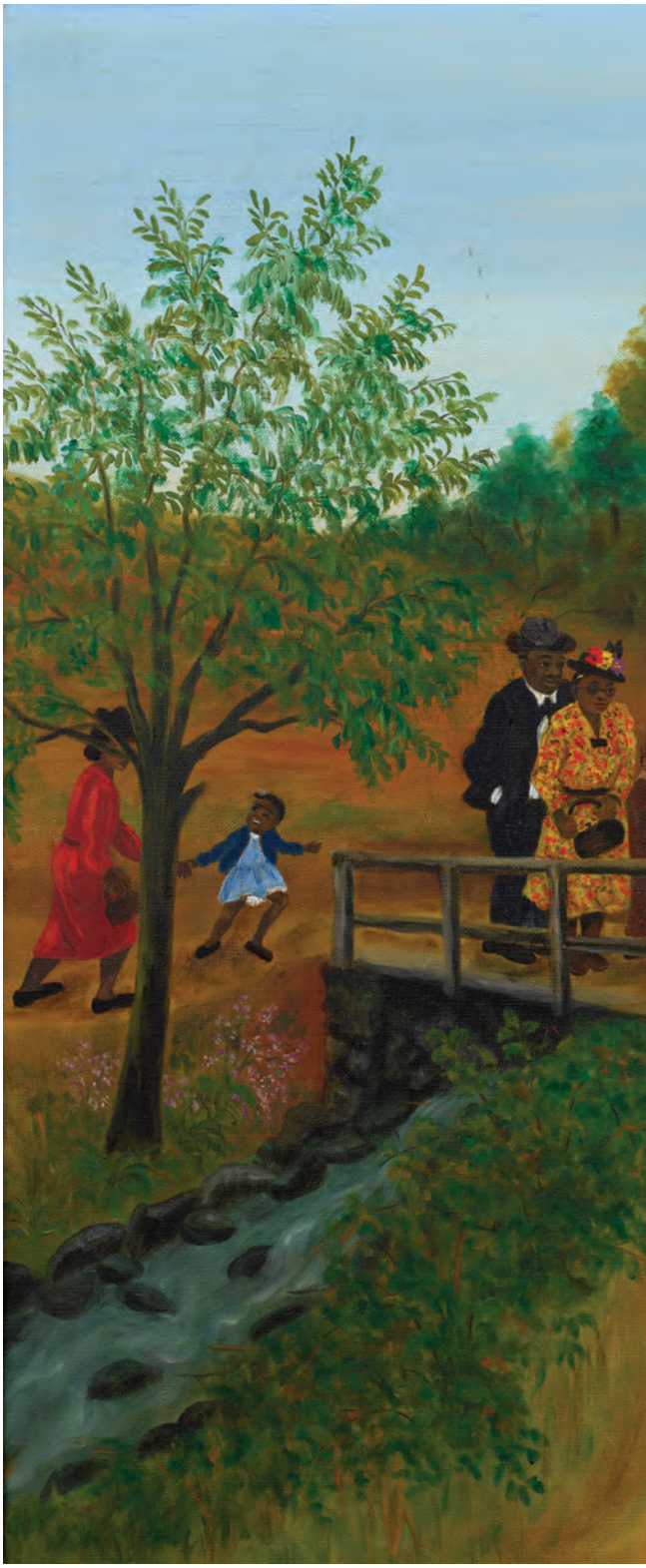
New York, Kraushaar Galleries, *Recent Paintings by Gallery Artists*, October–November, 1951
Lynchburg, Virginia, University of Lynchburg, Daura Gallery, *Inside Looking Out: The Art of Queena Stovall*, January 17–April 13, 2018, p. 59, illus. (this exhibition traveled to Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, May 12–October 14, 2018)

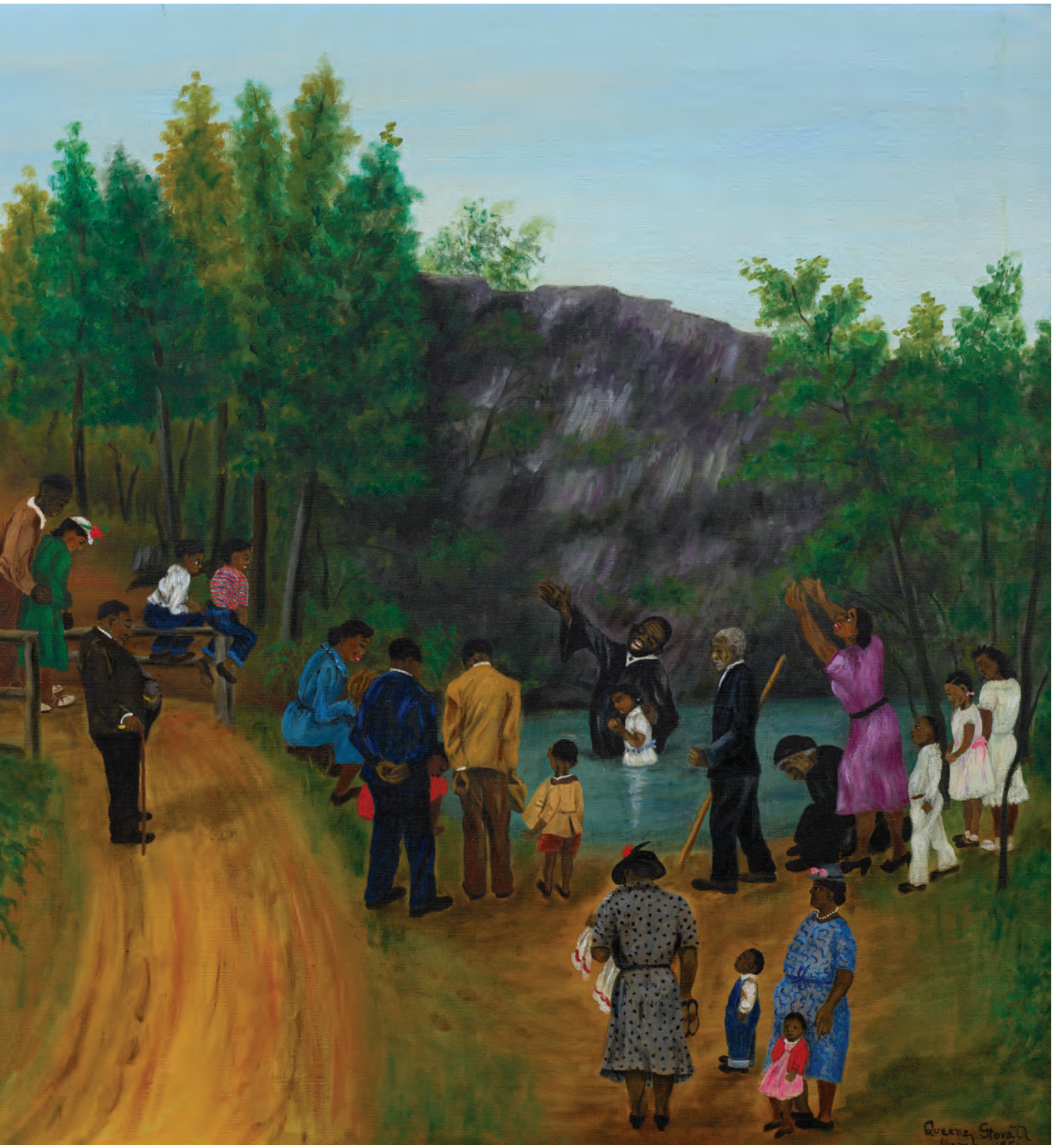
When painted in 1951, *The Baptising* marked Stovall's most ambitious undertaking in terms of size, subject matter, complexity of composition, and narrative power. River baptisms were still common occurrences in Amherst County in the mid-20th Century and this scene depicts an actual location along the Pedlar River. Stovall attended baptisms there and was thus conversant to capture accurately and in intricate detail the emotional atmosphere and religious zeal at the moment the preacher stands in the river, delivering a sermon and leading the congregation in song and prayer.

Onlookers are active participants in this spiritual ritual, with heads bowed and arms raised heavenward. A gentleman on the bank holds a pole to measure the depth of the water and help the baptized back to shore. A woman in the foreground stands at the ready, holding a towel or perhaps, dry clothes as she waits for the young girl to emerge, saved.

Stovall uses a curved road in the center of the canvas to divide dramatically the composition in two, allowing the raised bridge to form a high platform from which congregants have a birds-eye view of the spiritual awakening below. This compositional device also serves to separate visually the churning stream water on the left and the placid and peaceful pool on the right.

Stovall painted a second version of this scene in 1957 titled *Baptizing—Pedlar River*, which was purchased in 1959 by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.





Blackberry Picking

signed *Queena Stovall* and dated *July, 1950,* lower right, oil on canvas, 18 × 24 in.

PROVENANCE

The artist
[Kraushaar Galleries, New York]
Alfred Corning Clark II, New York, acquired directly from the above
Jean Sinclair Tailer, Palm Beach, Florida
By descent through the family to the present owner

EXHIBITED

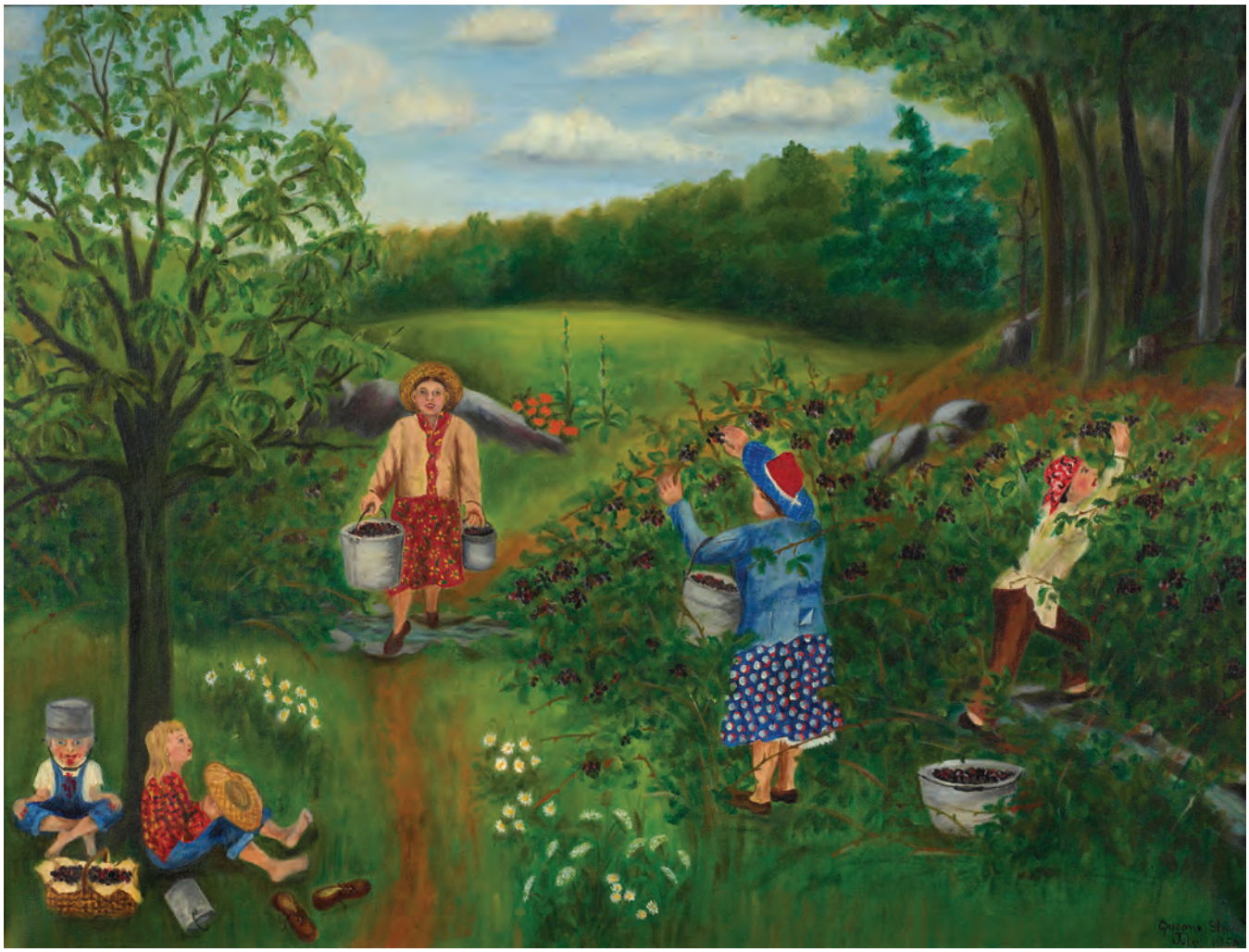
Lynchburg, Virginia, University of Lynchburg, Daura Gallery, *Inside Looking Out: The Art of Queena Stovall*, January 17–April 13, 2018, p. 46, illus. (this exhibition traveled to Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, May 12–October 14, 2018)

In central Virginia, mid- to late June marks the harvest season for blackberries. Stovall's representation of this popular activity captures the vivid colors of early summer and the hard-won rewards of venturing into the thorny brambles to pluck fruit and gather it into buckets. Here, the artist lightens the composition by including a small child, with lips, hands, and bib overalls stained red from eating berries, an empty bucket playfully perched atop his or her head.

Stovall evokes the season in remarkable detail, including Gerber daisies in full bloom, light sweaters to ward off the June chill, and broad-brimmed hats and a bandana to protect the faces from sun and wayward thorns. Even a white slip peeks out from under the polka-dotted dress of the figure stretching to reach the sweet gems.

That the artist dated all her paintings by month and year under her signature is both unusual for an artist and critical to being able to sequence her work. It shows that the mental image of this annual harvest was fresh in her mind when the painting was done in July 1950. The resultant image illustrates Stovall's tenet that "I had to paint somebody doing something, showing that they were working."[20]

20 Guy Friddell, "Artist Paints a Bittersweet World," *Richmond News Leader*, January 22, 1975.



Herefords in the Snow

signed *Queena Stovall* and dated *Feb., 1963*, lower right, oil on canvas, 19 × 24⅛ in.

PROVENANCE

The artist
Isabel Boggs, Lynchburg, Virginia, acquired directly from the above
Sybil Boggs, her sister, and Katherine Kemp
Anne Billups Jones, niece of Katherine Kemp
By descent through the family to the present owner, Virginia

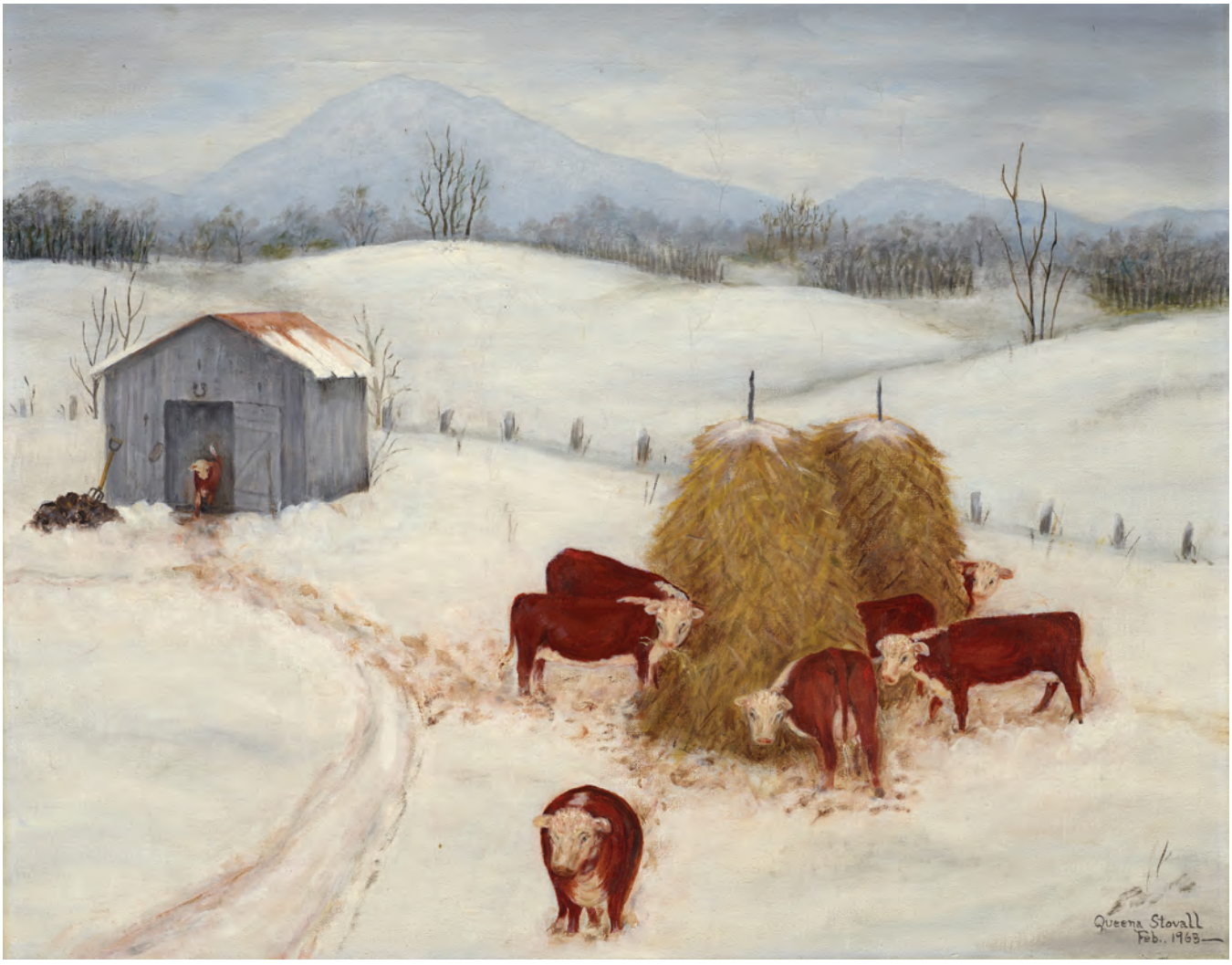
EXHIBITED

Lynchburg, Virginia, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, *Queena Stovall*, February 7–23, 1965
Lynchburg, Virginia, University of Lynchburg, Daura Gallery, *Inside Looking Out: The Art of Queena Stovall*, January 17–April 13, 2018, p. 83, illus. (this exhibition traveled to Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, May 12–October 14, 2018)

Herefords in the Snow is one of only five Stovall paintings devoid of people, as well as one of only three snow scenes that she painted. However, as in her other works, the painting includes, though more serenely, movement, humanity, and implied narrative. The cows, with individualized features and expressive faces, turn their heads in unison toward the viewer, as if interrupted from their meal. Muddy hoof prints in the snow lead the eye to a barn in the distance where a small calf emerges, prancing out through the snow to join the feast. A pitchfork sits atop freshly piled manure as tire marks indicate recent human presence.

Even in this outdoor scene, Stovall includes reference to home. The upturned horseshoe mounted above the barn door is still present on the former Stovall barn in Elon, Virginia.

Herefords in the Snow is the second to last complete work Stovall painted. Its calm and peacefulness, as well as the deftness of its compositional design and contrasting color, aptly show the artist's brilliance in capturing mood, time of day, the seasons, and the Blue Ridge Mountains that were her perennial anchor and inspiration.


Queena Stovall
Feb., 1963

Saturday Night Bath

signed *Queena Stovall* and dated *April, 1951*, lower right, oil on canvas, 18 1/8 × 24 1/8 in.

PROVENANCE

The artist
[Kraushaar Galleries, New York]
Alfred Corning Clark II, New York, acquired directly from the above
Jean Sinclair Tailer, Palm Beach, Florida
By descent through the family to the present owner

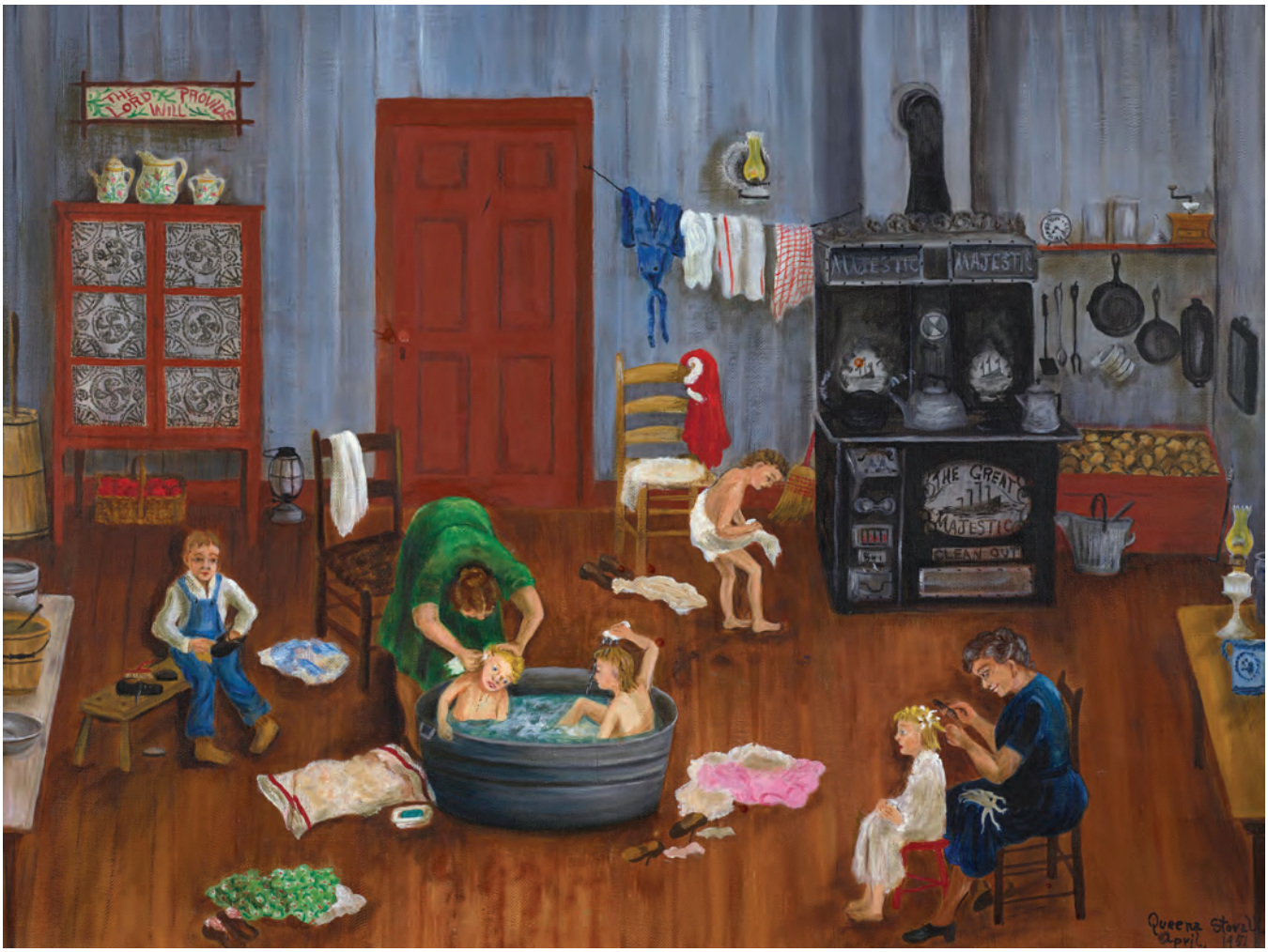
EXHIBITED

Lynchburg, Virginia, University of Lynchburg, Daura Gallery, *Inside Looking Out: The Art of Queena Stovall*, January 17–April 13, 2018, p. 60, illus. (this exhibition traveled to Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, May 12–October 14, 2018)

Stovall's interiors are imagined spaces often populated with objects and people from her own life. While the setting for *Saturday Night Bath* is not representative of Stovall's actual home, it includes The Great Majestic stove that stood in the center of her kitchen, as well as her tall pie safe cabinet with its intricately detailed tin door panels. The inside space depicted tells a story, capturing moments of ritual—in this case, children's bath time on Saturday night.

In such living spaces, Stovall creates compositions that are masterfully structured and balanced. Using strong horizontal and vertical architectural elements such as doorways, walls, and floors, along with more subtle placement of furniture, objects, and figures, the artist fills the space with an intricate pattern of people and objects that imply chaotic movement, but yet are portrayed rationally and aesthetically.

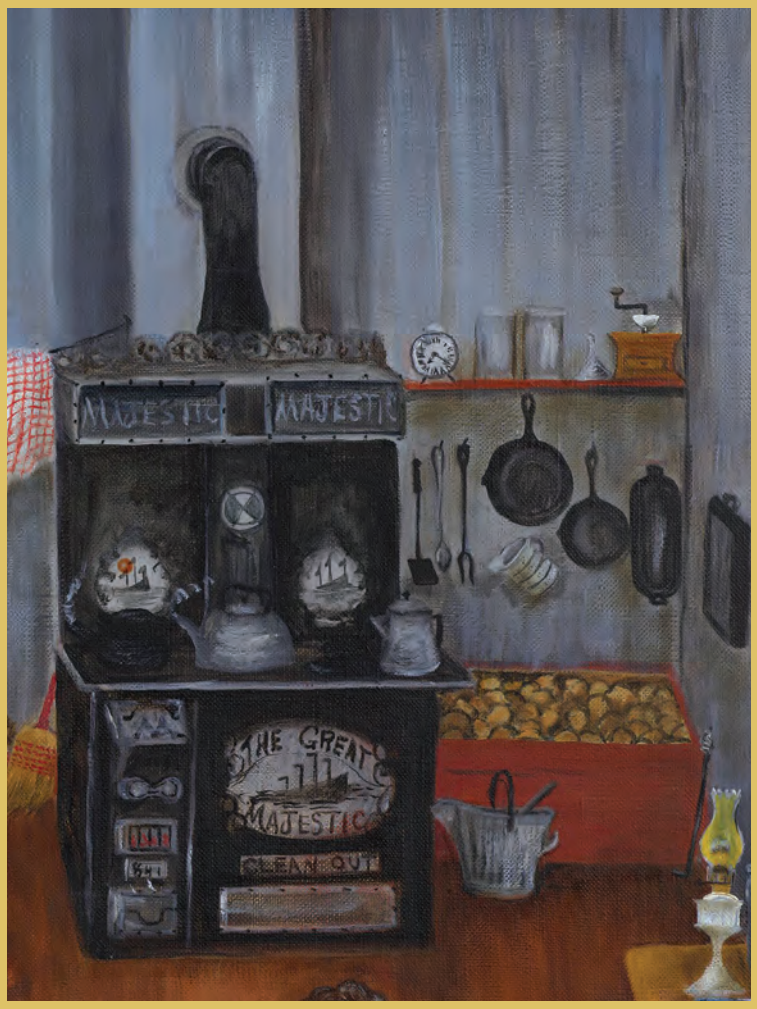
Though Stovall never directly identified herself in this painting, family lore ascribes Queena as the woman in green bending over, her mother-in-law seated and combing a granddaughter's hair, and the children as the first five of Stovall's eight offspring. According to tradition, the children bathed from oldest to youngest, as in the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water."


THE LORD WILL PROVIDE
MAJESTIC
MAJESTIC
THE GREAT
MAJESTIC
CLEAN OUT

Queena Stovall

(1887–1980)

Paintings of a Country Life



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