



Edmund Greacen
(1877–1949)

Admirers of Edmund Greacen's paintings applaud his delicate colorings, usually pale grays, greens, and violets. Like Claude Monet, Greacen was interested in capturing specific times of day, such as the luminosity of midday or the misty haze of early morning.

Born in New York City in 1877, Greacen graduated from New York University. After a trip around the world, arranged by his father to dissuade him from fighting in the Spanish-American War, he returned home at the age of 23 to enter the Art Students League of New York. He also took classes at the New York School of Art, where he studied with William Merritt Chase, who taught him to paint en plein air, as well as Frank Vincent Dumond, Robert Henri, Lois Mora, and Everett Shinn. Greacen traveled to Spain with the Chase class in 1905, and then studied independently in Holland, Belgium, and England. He did not return to the United States until 1909.

In the summer of 1907 Greacen and his family settled in Giverny, France. Over the preceding twenty years, this village on the river Epte had become an art colony of American Impressionists attracted by the presence of Claude Monet. Although Greacen met the master only once, the elder artist's influence was pervasive in the community and beneficial to Greacen's artistic development. During their time in Giverny, Greacen and his wife, Ethol, became close friends of American expatriate artist Theodore Earl Butler and his second wife, Marthe Hoschedé Butler, who was Monet's stepdaughter.

At the time the Greacens lived in Giverny, Impressionism was being redefined by a group of Americans working there. Led by Frederick Carl Frieseke and Richard Miller, these artists worked with female models in sun-drenched garden and riverside settings. Like them, Greacen concentrated much of his focus on garden scenes, many of which include depictions of his wife.

In the late summer or early fall of 1909, Greacen returned to the United States a convert to Impressionism. He allied himself with the colony of American Impressionists at Old Lyme, Connecticut. Between 1910 and 1917, he maintained a studio in New York City and sought refuge in Old Lyme for weekends or longer periods. In 1922, Greacen and John Singer Sargent founded the Grand Central Art Galleries as an artists' cooperative where members could keep their work on continual display. This successful venture outlived its founders by fifty-some years.

Greacen exhibited at the Paris Salon, the National Academy of Design, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Corcoran Gallery. He won the Salmagundi Prize in 1922 and the National Arts Club prize and medal in 1923 and 1935. In 1921 he was made an Associate member of the National Academy of Design; and in 1935 he became an Academician.

Public collections holding Greacen's work include the Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey; the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio; the Lyme Historical Society, Old Lyme, Connecticut; and the National Arts Club, New York.