



Anne Gould Hauberg, 1941

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Anne Gould Hauberg and Mark Tobey: Lives Lived for Art, Cultivated by Spirit

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Abstract

Seattle art patron Anne Gould Hauberg (1917–2016) and Seattle-based painter Mark Tobey (1890–1976) shared a common interest in art and faith. Their friendship spanned decades, with Hauberg providing patronage for Tobey, who, along with creating significant works of art for her and other Northwest collectors, taught her about the Bahá'í Faith, which guided her for the rest of her life. Following the recent death of Hauberg, the author reflects on her visits with the two art lovers—visits that occurred forty years apart—and pays tribute to them as individuals and as friends who nurtured and helped to sustain each other.

Resumé

Une mécène de Seattle, Anne Gould Hauberg (1917–2016), et le peintre Mark Tobey (1890–1976), établi à Seattle, partageaient en commun un intérêt pour les arts et la foi. Ils ont entretenu une amitié qui s'est poursuivie sur plusieurs décennies, au cours desquelles Hauberg parrainait le travail de Tobey et celui-ci, alors qu'il créait d'importantes œuvres d'art pour elle et d'autres collectionneurs du Nord-Ouest américain, lui faisait connaître les

enseignements de la foi bahá'íe, qui l'ont guidée tout le reste de sa vie. À la suite du décès récent de Hauberg, l'auteure nous fait part de ses réflexions sur les visites qu'elle a rendues à ces deux amateurs d'art – visites survenues à 40 ans d'intervalle – et leur rend hommage individuellement et comme amis qui se sont accompagnés et soutenus l'un l'autre.

Resumen

La patrocinadora de arte en Seattle, Anne Gould Hauberg (1917–2016) y el pintor de Seattle, Mark Tobey (1890–1976) compartieron un interés común en el arte y la fe. Su amistad duro por décadas, con Hauberg proveyendo patrocinio para Tobey, quien, al mismo tiempo que creaba obras de arte significativas para ella y otros coleccionistas del noroeste, le enseñó acerca de la Fe Bahá'í, la cual la guio por el resto de su vida. Tras la muerte reciente de Hauberg, el autor reflexiona sobre sus visitas con los dos amantes del arte—visitas que ocurrieron con 40 años de separación—y rinde homenaje a ellos como individuos y como amigos quienes se nutrieron y se ayudaron a sostenerse mutuamente.

Among the most illustrious people I have met in my life are the American painter Mark Tobey and the well-known Seattle art patron Anne Gould Hauberg, two visionaries who shared a great connection to both spirit and art. I was privileged to step briefly into their orbits two years before each passed away, only later realizing the profound influence they had had upon each other and upon the art world.

Tobey had one of the most creative and chaotic residences I had ever visited; he was in his eighties, living in

Basel, Switzerland when I spent a day with him in 1974, after my first pilgrimage to the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. Contrastingly, when I visited her in Seattle in 2014, Hauberg, then ninety-six, lived in a most elegant, orderly, and refined abode. Four decades separated those visits, and yet for me there was a great sense of continuity and connection in what we shared.

Before becoming aware of Hauberg, I had long admired the work of Mark Tobey, about whom I had written papers while studying aesthetics at Mills College. Influenced by my friendship with Arthur and Joyce Dahl, collectors of his work, and visits to their Pebble Beach home, I was thrilled when they arranged my meeting with Tobey in Switzerland. Fascinated by the connection of his Faith (which we shared) and his art, for which I had profound admiration, he became for me a symbol of the interrelation of the two.

When Tobey was a child, he experienced a sense of oneness with nature and an affinity for the sacredness and mystery of life. Born in 1890 in Centerville, Wisconsin, he was especially interested in nature study, biology, and zoology. But in 1911, determined to succeed as a fashion artist, he took a train to New York. His first one-man show of charcoal portraits was held in 1917 and arranged by Marie Sterner, who introduced him to the artist Juliet Thompson, for whom he agreed to pose. During the sittings, Tobey discovered that Thompson was a follower of the Bahá'í Faith, and he read

some of the literature in her studio. Invited to Green Acre, a Bahá'í conference center in Maine, he learned more about and joined the Faith that would have a powerful impact upon his life. Along with the Faith's spiritualizing effect, the "dynamism of New York played a part in [his] desire to liberate and activate form," according to William Seitz, who says those years were for Tobey a montage of "sirens, dynamic lights, brilliant parades and returning heroes. An age of confusion and stepped up rhythms" (45).

In 1922 Tobey moved to Seattle from New York and taught at a progressive school of the arts. The following year, he began to learn the technique of Chinese calligraphy from Teng Kuei, a young Chinese artist studying at the University of Washington (Seitz 47). Eventually he became known as a Northwest painter, though he spent a good part of his life in England, China (with Teng Kuei's family), Japan, and Switzerland.

In 1926, before he had achieved international renown, Tobey was working as an art teacher at the Cornish School and became the instructor of Anne Gould (later Hauberg), who was then nine years old. She remembered how he taught his students to "capture the energy of nature," but the students' mothers "were displeased that their sons and daughters were not being taught to draw realistically," including her own mother, who withdrew her from the class (Johns 27). However, Hauberg never forgot his influence.

The daughter of architect Carl Gould and exuberant social activist Dorothy Gould, Hauberg was born in 1917, grew up in a creative household, and developed an appreciation for all the arts. In Hauberg's biography, *Anne Gould Hauberg: Fired by Beauty*, Barbara Johns describes how the Goulds frequently entertained and also held "memorable family occasions spiked with color and bursts of unconventionality" (29). Hauberg recalls, "We always lived in the two worlds of social and artistic. Anything creative was their motto!" (qtd. in Johns 29).

Johns comments on how Hauberg was

instructed by her father's ethics and creativity and her mother's ebullient sociability and ambition. Reared with the decorum and benefits of privilege although sometimes constrained in means, she married into wealth and used it to create a richly textured personal style. It was a style colored by her passion for art and architecture and warmed by her relationships with artists and designers. (Johns 153)

The family lived on Seattle's Capitol Hill and at a "summer " home on Bainbridge Island and often went on sketching trips to the mountains or the shore and then placed their sketches on the fireplace mantle for a critique session. The children were "encouraged to pursue whatever creative or intellectual interest they expressed" (Johns 29).

Hauberg's father designed a number of prominent buildings in the Northwest, including the Olympic Hotel in Seattle and the Seattle Art Museum (now the Seattle Asian Art Museum following the Seattle Art Museum's move downtown). Hauberg herself studied architecture at the University of Washington and was the only female in the program. Years before her father had designed the university's campus and founded the architecture department. She married John Hauberg, heir to a lumber fortune. The Haubergs had three children and shared many interests, including a large art collection of works that reflected their diverse tastes. They commissioned eminent architect Roland Terry to design homes for them in Seattle and on Bainbridge Island to showcase their collections.

Hauberg became recognized as a civic activist, philanthropist, and patron of the arts. In particular, she is known for her support of Mark Tobey, for discovering Dale Chihuly, and for co-founding (with her husband and Chihuly) the Pilchuck Glass School in 1971. Her obituary notes: "She became the greatest supporter—emotionally, sometimes financially, always creatively—for the scores of glass artists who came to Pilchuck through the years to experience the unique school created by Dale Chihuly ("Anne Gould Hauberg").

A 2006 interview with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reveals that she "was responsible for the creation of Seattle's Freeway Park, the preservation

of Pioneer Square and Pike Place Market, and the Pilot School for Neurologically Impaired Children, now the University of Washington's Experimental Education Unit" (Sailor). The Pilot School was of special significance for Hauberg, as two of her children were born disabled and she had a deep commitment to contribute to education for those with mental disabilities.

Meanwhile, the Bahá'í teachings had propelled Mark toward innovation, unity, and worldmindedness. As he explains it:

At a time when experimentation expresses itself in all forms of life, search becomes the only valid expression of the spirit. . . . I am accused often of too much experimentation, but what else should I do when all other factors of man are in the same condition? I thrust forward into space as science and the rest do. The gods of the past are as dead today as they were when Christianity overcame the pagan world. The time is similar, only the arena is the whole world. (qtd. in Seitz 14)

In seeking influence from various cultures and art styles and in emphasizing the coming together of East and West, Tobey often addressed the need for social transformation and its relationship to art:

Now it seems to me that we are in a universalizing period. . . . If

we are to have world peace, we should have an understanding of all the idioms of beauty because the members of humanity who have created these idioms of beauty are going to be a part of us. And I would say that we are in a period when we are discovering and becoming acquainted with these idioms for the first time. (qtd. in Seitz 18)

Tobey was perpetually interested in the spiritual quest and in making it alive, relevant, and modern. In a letter, he writes:

To bend the knee on Sunday or to deny the Creator altogether . . . is no solution. The solution is the balancing of the forces which bring man to some state of equilibrium, and that will, and that only, will bring peace. . . . If people would only take time to investigate the writings of Bahá'u'lláh they would find the answers, for we are at the time of the breakup of the evolution of the parts with their peak in nationalism and enter the great universal day when all parts have to function in the whole. . . . Civilization is not something one builds like a cathedral or a building. It is a state of equilibrium which must be maintained if man is to move forward in the right sense of movement, balanced like a man on horseback. There is an old law that frozen ice in a river cannot break itself.

There must be an agency to do this. The ice cannot respond and become flowing water again without the sun, nor to do great changes in civilization come without a spiritual catalyst to break up the frozen forms and free the human spirit. (qtd. in Thomas 30)

Arthur Dahl describes Tobey's work as "fresh, vigorous, strangely spiritual in quality, and very exciting (9). And more than any other modern artist, Seitz claims, Tobey has given form to mystical states, to worship: "Transcendental human consciousness, it could be said, is Tobey's ultimate theme" (Seitz 40).

As a result of her long friendship with Mark Tobey, Hauberg was acquainted with the Bahá'í Faith and was increasingly drawn to it in the 1960s. Johns comments:

Tobey had embraced this syncretic religious teaching when he was a young man, at one point even dwelling on the possibility of giving himself to its mission full-time rather than to art. During the 1960s, when Anne and Tobey were often in correspondence about the Opera House mural, their letters also frequently included mention of Bahá'í principles. . . . Anne was attracted to its call for unity of all people across lines or race, ethnicity, religion, and nationality, its acceptance of the equality of men and women, and aspirations

for universal education and world peace. . . . On October 17, 1969, she was formally registered as a Bahá'í. Her commitment is a sustained one. She found guidance in its code of conduct and tried to live by its principles. (103)

The Haubergs shared a dream of having a cultural center on the Pilchuck tree farm with two museums where regional art could be exhibited and artists could work. In their vision, a performing arts space would be created in a natural amphitheater. In the mid-1960s they wrote to Tobey about this dream, specifying that the larger museum would be named the "Mark Tobey Museum of Fine Art" and would be dedicated to housing his works and archives. They envisioned the smaller museum as being dedicated to various crafts (Johns 119). The Haubergs offered Tobey a "lifetime stipend" along with a pledge to buy art directly from him and his dealers (Johns 121). They also "made plans to buy a house for Tobey in preparation for his eventual return to Seattle, and Anne made arrangements for its supplemental use by the local Bahá'í group, who embraced the idea of its one day being the home of one of their most prominent members" (Johns 121).

But these plans never came to fruition. Conditions in the world made it difficult for the Haubergs to carry out their full vision, though their Pilchuck Glass School flourished, and Tobey remained in Switzerland until

his death in 1976. The Haubergs did fund a film, *Mark Tobey Abroad*, which was produced by Robert Gardner of Harvard's Film Student Center (Johns 121).

In 1978, Hauberg's husband decided to divorce her. She asked for a "year's grace period in keeping with the Bahá'í teaching that called for reflection and reconsideration," to which he agreed, but he immediately remarried when the year was over (Johns 133).

Hauberg continued her support of various artistic endeavors; an Anne Gould Hauberg Gallery opened at the Pacific Arts Center; she was a founding member of the board of the Northwest School, which "gave equal emphasis to arts and academics"; and she established a fund at the Seattle Art Museum to purchase craft works for its collection (Johns 140). In addition, she gave portions of her vast collection to Harborview Hospital, The Bush School, the University of Washington, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art ("Anne Gould Hauberg").

Tacoma, Washington, also became a focal point for Hauberg. She served as a founding member on the board of Tacoma's Museum of Glass. In 1994 she joined the board of the Tacoma Art Museum and focused her attention on developing its collection of American art from the Northwest. She gave 159 works of art to the museum—mostly glass but also jewelry and paintings, including an original work by Tobey. When she died, the museum's executive director Stephanie Stebich said,

"I would call her the patron saint for art. . . . She really understood our singular focus on Northwest art. . . . We lost a Northwest original. She had an original eye an original vision and certainly an original style. She would often say, 'If you don't support artists there won't be any.' That's what she always did. Artists never forgot that generosity of spirit" (qtd. in Sailor). The museum is planning a show of the highlights of Hauberg's collection for the fall of 2017.

In 1984, after a burglary, Hauberg sold her home and moved into a condominium in an "elegant 1920s building on Seattle's First Hill, a neighborhood where the mansions of Seattle's first families, including her grandparents, had once stood" (Johns 144). She opened the walls between living and dining rooms to create a space to hold meetings and parties, filled her home with her own art collection, and commissioned custom furniture. Johns writes that she "could look in any direction and see a colorful, layered, and textured tableau of art objects of varied media" (144). This is where I visited her in 1996, amid her beautiful art treasures. It was a distinct pleasure to be in her environment. We had tea, served by her caregiver companion, in a small room where she reclined. At ninety-six, she still had spunk, spirit, and an avid interest in hearing about how the arts were developing in the Bahá'í community. According to Johns:

The Bahá'í Faith remained a source of renewal and affirmation

for Anne. Its universalist creed encouraged her penchant for holistic thinking. She began to see that its central message affirmed patterns in her own life. Her dedication to education she found in the Bahá'í's [*sic*] instruction to "make education available to all"; her zeal for making creative connections among people of diverse interests, in Bahá'í's [*sic*] call for the joining of "arts, crafts, and sciences." She identified even the internationalism of the glass community she had helped nurture with the Bahá'í teaching "Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confided to your own selves;" in such a way she could imagine how it advanced the principle of the unity of humankind. Among the papers she kept at hand was a lyrical poem by Bahá'u'llah [*sic*] "Blessed is the Spot". (149)

In 2001, on the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Pilchuck Glass School, a totem pole was created to honor its founders, who were acknowledged for their unique contributions—"Chihuly's originating idea, Anne's vision of what was possible, and John's sustained financial support" (Johns 152). Anne was represented at the top of the totem pole, "wearing a Northwest Coast-style hat made of blown glass on her head, and the carved patterns of a Chilkat blanket wrapped around her shoulders" (152). Chihuly was depicted at the center, with a bird-shaped shield

bearing a cast-glass image of the sun, and John Hauberg appeared at the base, "holding a cast-glass ceremonial sword" (Johns 152).

Anne Gould Hauberg was known as someone who brought people together to "generate the ideas, network, and synergy necessary to propel" various programs related to art and education. She committed herself "fearlessly and fiercely to the things in which she believed. Late in her life she exclaimed, 'What would life be without the things that give beauty—art, dance, theatre, music—the things that make life bearable?'" (Johns 153).

Hauberg's broad artistic and philanthropic influence in the wider world remains a stellar example to me. Because of her unique position, she rendered valuable service to and shed luster upon her Faith. She may not have been familiar to many members of her faith community, yet faith played a larger part in her life than many realized. Robert Wilson, another Bahá'í artist associated with the Northwest, describes how he held many informational meetings for seekers interested in the Bahá'í Faith at her apartment on First Hill. She asked him to be her traveling companion on pilgrimage, after which they spent a day in Jerusalem at the Citadel of David, where Chihuly had a large installation. They also traveled to London, visiting the gravesite of Shoghi Effendi and spending time at the Victoria and Albert Museum, studying antique glass as it related to the Pilchuck school. (Wilson).

In 2007, the University of Washington Libraries' Artist Images Award was renamed the Anne Gould Hauberg Artist Images Award in her honor. Her obituary lists many other honors including the Matrix Award from the Association of Women in Communication; the Washington State Governor's Award; the Seattle Center's Legion of Honor; the Aileen Osborn Webb Silver Award from the American Crafts Council; the Visionaries Award from New York's American Craft Museum; and the Dorothy Stimson Bullitt Award for philanthropy from the Junior League of Seattle. Pilchuck School crowned her "Queen of Everything." Northwest Designer Craftsmen produced a documentary about Anne, *Anne Gould Hauberg: Visionary*.¹ She is also included in the film *Pilchuck—A Dance With Fire* ("Anne Gould Hauberg").

According to Zabine Van Ness, Seattle's Unity Museum, which is dedicated to peace and intercultural understanding, will have an ongoing exhibit on the life of Anne Gould Hauberg that will be prominently placed near exhibits on Mark Tobey and Dale Chihuly as part of the history of the University of Washington district. A series of presentations and talks on Hauberg will be released through the museum's "Uniting Hearts Academy" speakers' bureau and shared through online university courses and local colleges (Van Ness).

Hauberg once wrote, "My hope for you and for myself is that our lives are filled with purpose and filled with content, expressed with skill and energy, and most of all that our contributions endure in the memories of those whose lives we touch" (qtd. in "Anne Gould Hauberg"). Tobey claimed: "There is no such thing as a distinctly original artist. Every artist has his patron saints whether or not he is willing to acknowledge them" (qtd. in Seitz 22). No doubt Hauberg was one of Tobey's "patron saints"—in a literal sense in terms of her patronage and in a creative sense as well. And she, no doubt, remained appreciative of Tobey's works and spiritual influence to the end of her earthly life.

Two years after I visited each of them in their respective homes forty years apart, they passed away—Tobey in 1976 and Hauberg in 2016. In my mind, I can still see Tobey greeting me in his rumpled white linen suit from the top of a long stairway on a warm summer day in Basel, Switzerland and guiding me through his disheveled collection of African masks and other artifacts amidst all kinds of art that was rolled up, piled up, hung carelessly on walls, everywhere filling his home. He was edging towards senility at the time, but he took great pride in showing me his multi-faceted and prolific collection. Bread crumbs to feed the birds sat on his window ledge; banana peels rested on the mantle. Chaos and creativity were manifest in equal abundance. By contrast, I marveled at the level of order and spatial refinement

1 Available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zkj1WXpNyko>.

in Hauberg's abode. She, too, was nearing the end of her days, but she placed a high importance on the maintenance of all that she had acquired—and sometimes had helped to create—in a life blessed by affluence *and* a quest for beauty. Art, faith, and a deep respect for artists' contributions to the world threaded each of their tapestries.

While I cannot adequately describe either Tobey or Hauberg or their impact upon my own life or art, these visits were of profound significance to me. In my imagination, we—and other souls committed to the comingling of art and spirit—are all intertwined in worlds to come.



Anne Gould Hauberg, 1960
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Mark Tobey, 1944, Geyserville
Photo by Arthur L. Dahl,
courtesy of Gregory C. Dahl

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Tobey's home and studio
Basel, Switzerland, 1976

Photo by Paul Slaughter, courtesy of Gregory C. Dahl