The son of Lithuanian immigrants, Nashville native Meyer Wolfe (1897 – 1985) was an American painter, printmaker, and sculptor whose prolific career spanned over sixty years.

Growing up in an impoverished family, Wolfe lived in the basement of a hotel while studying art in New York City. In the 1920s, he won a scholarship to the National Academy of Design. Wolfe exhibited with the Society of Independent Artists and was represented by the Anderson Galleries in New York City. His work was shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the National Gallery of Canada. Wolfe died in 1985.

Noted for his innovative talent, colored pencil works, and woodcut prints, Wolfe's work was exhibited at national and international venues, including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the National Gallery of Canada. Wolfe's contributions to American art are celebrated in the Meyer Wolfe Legacy Project, which showcases his work and the story of his impact on the arts.
Chapter One: Lithuania, Louisville, Nashville, Chicago, & New York
1897 – 1926

Lazarovitch Woldkowitch was seventeen in 1886 when he left his home in Yurburg, Lithuania, to escape religious persecution. He emigrated to the United States and settled in New York, where he adopted the name of Jacob Wolfe and began a career as an itinerant salesman. Within a few years he was visiting Nashville, Tennessee, where a marriage was arranged between himself and fifteen-year old Rebecca Sklar. Like Jacob, Rebecca was Lithuanian and Jewish, and they married in 1892. The young couple moved to Louisville, where their son Meyer (or ‘Mike’ as the family called him) was born in 1897, the second of ten children.

Meyer was three when his parents returned to Nashville and his father took a job collecting scrap metal for the Werthan Company. Settling in a crowded, multi-racial neighborhood just north of the Tennessee State Capitol, the family’s apartment was one of four in a pre-Civil War house with no electricity or indoor plumbing. Recent immigrants, the Wolfes had no regional bias against their Irish, Italian, and African American neighbors. Meyer grew up comfortable with everyone. His neighborhood informed his intellectual and artistic development.

A bright teenager with many talents, including music, theatre, and art, Meyer became involved in the Young Men’s Hebrew Association (YMHA), a privately supported venue for arts, sports, and socializing. His drawings for The Nashville YM.H.A. News gained the attention of Carey Orr, a political cartoonist for The Nashville Tennessean and American. When Orr was hired by the Chicago Tribune in 1917, Meyer traveled with him to enroll at Chicago’s Art Institute.

While in Chicago, Meyer studied and did freelance work in commercial illustration. He struggled financially however, and returned to Nashville after less than a year. By spring 1918 he was again drawing for The Nashville YM.H.A. News as well as The Tennessean while making new plans.

Resolving to earn a living as an artist, Wolfe moved to New York City in the summer of 1918 and studied at the Art Students League until 1920. Among his instructors was John Sloan, a painter, printmaker, and noted member of the realist “Ashcan School,” who advised his students to be inspired by everyday life, make art for the love of art, and paint “what you know.” Sloan would prove a lifelong influence on Wolfe as he attended classes and supported himself through illustration. Within a few years he had saved enough money to travel and study abroad.
The Star of All Things, Y.M.H.A. News, August 1915

Some of Meyer Wolfe’s earliest acclaim was for his drawings published in The Nashville Y.M.H.A. News. In this cartoon, Meyer, or “Mike” as friends called him, pokes fun at his varied activities, including his job as a store window dresser.

Image courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
A protégé of Tennessean political cartoonist and future Pulitzer winner Carey Orr, Wolfe moved to Chicago in 1917 and briefly attended the Art Institute. When his studies were upended by World War I, he returned to Nashville where this drawing was published, noting him as “the pupil of Carey Orr.”
From roughly 1918 to 1926, Meyer Wolfe worked in New York as an illustrator for a newspaper syndicate. This pen and ink drawing is an example of his commercial artwork from the period. Through his illustration work Wolfe saved enough money to travel to Europe in 1926.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe.*
Based on its handwritten date and cover inscription, this collection of sketches is from Wolfe’s enrollment at New York’s Art Student League. The book contains live model drawings from his studio classes as seen in the example of a “20 Min –” timed exercise.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
Sketchbook
1927

This book of drawings made during Wolfe’s 1927 trip to Europe includes a quick rendition of an outdoor café.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
Sketchbook
1930s

This collection of loose drawings contains scenes Depression era Nashville, including a subtle sketch of sculptor William Edmondson at work.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
Sketchbook
1930s

This collection of loose drawings contains scenes Depression era Nashville, including a subtle sketch of sculptor William Edmondson at work.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
This collection of loose drawings contains scenes Depression era Nashville, including a subtle sketch of sculptor William Edmondson at work.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
Sketchbook
1930s

Also a collection of Nashville drawings, this book is an example of how Wolfe worked to document figures and scenes for future prints and paintings.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
Chapter Two:
Europe, Tunisia, Tennessee, San Francisco, New York, & Nashville
1926 – 1933

Anticipating a return to Tennessee, Meyer contacted his childhood friend Alfred Starr about his paintings of Europe and Africa. In response, Starr arranged for Wolfe’s first one artist show at the Nashville Carnegie Library on Capitol Hill in November 1928. Following this exhibition and a second one in Memphis, Meyer and Louise moved to San Francisco to be near her family. By 1932 they were living in a cabin in Tennessee’s Smoky Mountains. Here, both artists documented the local people and scenery of the area —culminating in Louise’s photograph Tennessee Mountain Woman. Its 1933 publication in Vanity Fair would launch her career.

In the wake of this success, the couple relocated to New York, where Louise joined the staff of Harper’s Bazaar in 1936. Meanwhile, Meyer continued to visit Nashville periodically, observing, sketching, and thinking. Recalling his mentor John Sloan’s enthusiasm for urban realism and skill in lithography, he began a series of prints in 1933 documenting life in his childhood neighborhood.

In 1926, Wolfe arrived in Europe to absorb the art and architecture of the continent, and after a brief tour, applied himself to the study of art. When the rigor of courses at Paris’s Académie Julian proved unsatisfying, he left for southern France and practiced landscape painting on his own. In late 1927 he crossed the Mediterranean to North Africa. In Kairouan, Tunisia, Wolfe painted whenever weather permitted, taking advantage of inexpensive local accommodations. He improved his painting while in Europe and North Africa, but this was not the most important result of the trip.

He was standing on a train platform in Tunisia when he met a young woman from San Francisco named Louise Dahl. Louise was in North Africa to enhance her skill in photography, and like Meyer, was working hard to become professionally established. Attracted to the bearded young painter, Louise later said she “just liked the look of the cut of that guy.” The couple found each other intellectually stimulating, and spent their first evening together arguing the merits of Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling. Following a whirlwind courtship in Africa and Europe, they sailed to New York City where they married in 1928.

Wolfe studied Impressionism during his first trip to Europe. In this 1927 image he poses with his palette and easel while painting landscapes in southern France. Image courtesy of Tennessee State Library

Meyer and Louise, soon after meeting in Kairouan, Tunisia, 1927. Image courtesy of Louise Dahl Wolfe
After “stifling” art classes in Paris, Wolfe left for southern France to study landscape painting on his own. By late 1927 he was in North Africa where he completed this view of the ancient Islamic city of Kairouan. Rendered in an Impressionist style, this painting may have started as an exercise. Upon Wolfe’s return to the United States in 1928, the piece was featured in his first exhibition held at Nashville’s Carnegie Library on Capitol Hill.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
Tunisian Bride
(Arab Girl in Wedding Dress)
Oil on canvas
1927

According to Wolfe, his adventures abroad made him feel confident in his ability to be an artist. He was thirty years old when he completed this intimate portrait of a young Tunisian woman that became a centerpiece of his 1928 Nashville exhibition.

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
Wolfe’s first solo exhibit was in late November 1928 at the downtown Carnegie Library. Featuring work from his recent trip abroad, one reviewer called it “the best single exhibition ever held in Nashville.” In this article, one of Wolfe’s former instructors, Michel Jacobs, tells a Nashville lecture audience they “will be justly proud of Mr. Wolfe, in equal measure with the Parthenon at Centennial Park.”

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
In 1932 the Wolfes moved to a remote area of the Smokey Mountains to work. While there, Louise made photographs of local residents, developed in a makeshift darkroom powered by the battery of a Ford Model-A. After a friend of a friend shared her work with *Vanity Fair* editor Frank Crowninshield, this image was published in November 1933, launching Dahl-Wolfe’s professional career.

*Courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents*
Inspired by San Francisco photographer Anne Brigman, Louise Dahl began making photographs in the 1920s. By 1933 she and Meyer were married and living in New York, where her portfolio, including a print of this still life, was reviewed by Harper’s Bazaar. The organic shapes of the image recall the seminal photography of Edward Weston, whom the Wolfes met in 1930. Louise Dahl-Wolfe joined Harper’s as a fashion photographer in 1936.

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
Louise Dahl-Wolfe
*At Alfred Starr’s Theater, The Bijou, Nashville, Tennessee*
1932

Meyer’s old friend Alfred Starr was a theatre-chain executive when Louise Dahl-Wolfe visited one of his downtown theatres and made this photo. The young man in the portrait may have resided in Meyer’s former Capitol Hill neighborhood. Five years later, this image was included in *Photography 1839-1937* – the first photography exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art.

*Courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents*
Red Eye’s Hall
1934

According to Meyer Wolfe, “Red Eye” was the African American owner of a dance hall on Cedar Street (Charlotte Avenue) near Nashville’s Capitol Hill. Described as a “delightful entertainer” and “colorful character,” Red Eye was also a baseball fan, and “rarely missed a game” at nearby Sulphur Dell park. A center of light-hearted entertainment, his night club was the subject of one of Wolfe’s first Nashville inspired lithographs.

Courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens
Tuesday-Othelia, Lithograph, 1934

Othelia Butts was a laundress employed by Wolfe’s mother on Tuesdays. A portrait of strength, Othelia appears in a number of his works. This image, along with Red Eye’s Hall and Vanderbilt Clinic, are among the labor related prints and drawings in the Ben and Beatrice Goldstein Foundation Collection at the Library of Congress.

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
Man Calling, Charcoal, 1942

This charcoal portrait of a Nashville resident was likely a study made in preparation for a subsequent lithograph printing and oil painting.

Courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens
Man Calling, Lithograph, 1944

Prints from the Man Calling series, like this one, were included in numerous American drawing and print exhibitions of the 1940s—including high profile shows at the San Francisco Museum of Art, at the Los Angeles County Museum, and Library of Congress.

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
Man Calling, Charcoal, 1938

This oil painting in Wolfe’s Man Calling series was tragically destroyed in a 2008 fire.

Courtesy of Tennessee Historical Quarterly
Chapter Three:
Portraits of Nashville
1933 – 1948

Lithography was invented in Germany during the 1790s and is a printing process based on the incompatibility of grease and water. An artist draws with a special crayon on a flat polished stone then wets the stone, upon which ink is applied with a roller. The ink is repelled by the water and adheres only to the crayon as the image is printed from the stone. Beginning in the early 1930s Meyer Wolfe employed lithography to portray an under-represented side of Nashville, specifically African American life in his formative Capitol Hill neighborhood. While some images were from direct observation in the 1930s, others were taken from sketchbooks done years before. They present persons he may have known personally, working, playing, and at worship. The religious scenes are especially intimate, as according to Meyer, he enjoyed attending black church services as a child.

Wolfe's preference for these subjects derived from both his training as an artist and childhood recollections. Recalling John Sloan's mandate to render “what you know,” he was inspired by memories of the people in his former neighborhood whose circumstances in the Jim Crow south he knew well. While artists such as Dorothea Lange specifically documented hardship during the Depression, Wolfe's portrayals do not shout social injustice, but simply evoke the hardscrabble spirit of the era. His Nashville themed lithographs and paintings present real people in real times.

During these years, Wolfe continued drawing, painting, and keeping sketchbooks. A participating artist in the Federal Government’s Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) of the 1930s, he exhibited work nationwide, including Vermont Ruin, an oil painting sold at the New York World’s Fair in 1939. But despite considerable effort, and acclaim for the Nashville series, Wolfe's success remained limited. By the late 1940s he was moving in a new direction in terms of both style and medium.
*Untitled (Railroad Bridge)*, Oil on canvas, 1938

In a scene near Nashville’s Capitol Hill, Wolfe depicts the sun setting behind the railroad bridge that still spans Jo Johnston Avenue near Tenth Avenue North

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
I Hide My Face Before the Lord
Lithograph
1935

This religious scene from Nashville was included in the 1942 Artists for Victory Exhibition at New York’s Metropolitan Museum.

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
In an unpublished memoir, Meyer Wolfe identified Nashville’s “red light districts” (sic) as “confined largely to several streets north of the city” —including Spruce and Gay Streets near the State Capitol. Recalling his childhood, he said, “I knew these streets intimately since they were all on my paper route…my weekly collection was on Saturday morning so there was hardly a soul stirring and the houses were quiescent as a graveyard. When I rang the doorbell only the maid was up and about, and it was she who paid me my 10 cents for the week.”

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
Wolfe described one bathing spot along the Cumberland River as having “a perfect sandbar; the most fun was swimming to ride the shallow waves behind a passing steamboat.”

*Courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens*
Alcohol was prohibited in Tennessee from 1909 to 1933, and so it is possible Mooney’s Place was a new drinking establishment when depicted in the mid-1930s.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
Remembering warm summers along the Cumberland River, Wolfe wrote, “The negro churches performed their Baptisms on Sunday afternoons when there was no activity on the wharf.”

*Courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens*
One of Wolfe’s best known prints, this crowded scene from Vanderbilt Hospital evokes the resignation of weary people waiting to be helped.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
Possibly returning from a long day of work, a man carries firewood as he walks with two women through a North Nashville neighborhood.

_Courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens_
Untitled
(Figure in a Landscape)
Oil on canvas
1934

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
Meyer Wolfe loved music and was known for his singing ability. *Piano Player* was completed during World War II, and could be a portrait of a Nashville musician or possibly someone the Wolfes knew in Manhattan.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
The World’s Fair Department of Contemporary Art informs Wolfe that one of his submitted works had been selected for purchase.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
### Purchase Receipt
December 27, 1939

The painting *Vermont Ruin* is today in the collection of the University of Minnesota

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
Letter
March 21, 1940

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) acknowledges Wolfe's print shipment to Nashville and mentions his friend Alfred Starr assisting with publicity for a public exhibition.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
Catalog, The Artist Guild showing Meyer Wolfe and Charles Cagle
April 1940

This first exhibition by the Nashville Artist Guild was sponsored by the WPA, and took place on the campus of today’s Vanderbilt Peabody College of Education.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
In 1934 Wolfe entered four lithographs in Salons of America’s unjuried exhibition, including Tuesday-Othelia and Red Eye’s Hall.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
Exhibition Catalog
American Art Today
National Art Society
1939

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum

AMERICAN ART TODAY

NEW YORK WORLD’S FAIR

Published by NATIONAL ART SOCIETY
Exhibition Catalog
1942

During World War II, Wolfe contributed two prints to this gigantic 1942 show at New York's Metropolitan Museum.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
Exhibition Catalog
1946

After the war, Wolfe placed two lithographs, *Man Calling* and *Women Bathing*, in this 1946 San Francisco exhibition.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
In the summer of 1965, the Southern Vermont Art Center was the site of Meyer Wolfe’s first all sculpture exhibition.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
Chapter Four:
Louise Dahl-Wolfe
1895 – 1989

A student of fine art and color theory at the San Francisco Institute of Art, Louise Dahl began experimenting with photography in 1921. After meeting future husband Meyer Wolfe in Tunisia in 1927, she became a freelance photographer before joining Harper’s Bazaar in 1936—a time when women’s magazines were growing in popularity and reputation.

Working with editors Carmel Snow and Diana Vreeland, Dahl-Wolfe made fashion photography an art form in its own right, putting women at the forefront of the industry. From 1936 to 1958, her photographs for Harper’s included 86 covers, 600 images published in color, and thousands in black-and-white. A pioneer in the use of outdoor light, vivid color, and shooting on location, her innovations and modernist touches made her work celebrated in the mid-twentieth century, influencing photographers such as Irving Penn and Richard Avedon. Dahl-Wolfe is also known for her portraits of celebrities, including dancer Josephine Baker, filmmaker Jean Cocteau, and sculptor Isamu Noguchi, and was instrumental in launching the careers of actress Lauren Bacall and sculptor William Edmondson.

Following her departure from Harper’s in 1958, Dahl-Wolfe continued her portraiture and did work for Vogue and Sports Illustrated, before retiring in 1960. Years later she reflected on her life with Meyer:

“We have a lot of fun together. He’s been the luckiest thing in my life. I’ll tell you, if I’ve done anything, I’ve done it with enthusiasm. It is a very precious time in our life right now. I have a wonderful companion in my husband. I just hope it doesn’t get too crowded before we pass out the picture.”

In the wake of Meyer’s death in 1985, Louise Dahl-Wolfe lived in Nashville for a time before returning to New Jersey where she passed away in 1989.
Harper’s Bazar
March 1943

This Harper’s cover featuring eighteen-year-old model Lauren Bacall got the attention of Hollywood director Howard Hawks – leading to Bacall’s 1944 film debut in To Have and Have Not with Humphry Bogart.
Louise Dahl-Wolfe’s bold use of color is seen in this cover image of 1950s super-model Jean Patchett at the Alhambra Palace in Spain.
According to Louise Dahl-Wolfe, “This was actually a fashion shoot for bathing suits but I got the model to pose nude for me; she had to put the towel around her head against the burning heat of the Mojave.”

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
Nashville sculptor William Edmondson was the subject of numerous portraits by Louise Dahl-Wolfe. In addition, she and Meyer brought his work to the attention of Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) director Alfred Barr, Jr. In 1937, Edmondson became the first African-American to have a one-artist show at MoMA.

*Image courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents*
Suzy Parker by the Seine, Costume by Balenciaga, 1953

With an artist sketching in the foreground, this fashion plate is from one of the Dahl-Wolfe’s many location shoots in Paris.

Image courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents
Orson Welles, 1938

This portrait of Welles was made the same year as his famous radio adaptation War of the Worlds, just prior to his 1941 film masterpiece Citizen Kane.

Image courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents
In her 1984 book, A Photographer’s Scrapbook, Dahl-Wolfe noted the Asian backdrop of this image was constructed in a New York studio.

*Image courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents*
Mary Sykes in Puerto Rico
1938

“People say I was demanding, and I guess I did drive my models hard. I was teased by my models for saying ‘Hold it! Hold it!’ All the time. I suppose I stormed a lot, but in the end, we’d all have a drink together.”

- Louise Dahl-Wolfe

Image courtesy of the Center for Creative Photography, Arizona Board of Regents
Cosmetic Color: Vibrant Violet

- Opposite: Vibrant violet, new radiant-completion lighting, applied here to a sleeveless chiffon dress that descends in a narrowing line from a wide collar and a back-plunging neckline. By Cornelle-Extene, in Orquidea Fantasia raw silk. About $75. Miss Bergdorf at Bergdorf Goodman: D. Hyslop, Minneapolis; Joseph Magnin; Hat by Lilly Dache; Kayser’s “Plum Pixie” stockings.

- Above: The iridescent glow of a violet linen suit, cut along a straight line, is heightened by a white silk dupion shirt. Suit (by Harry Frenkel), in Mayfield Irish linen, about $90; and shoes by Mayfield at Lord and Taylor. Suit, also at Mostel’s; 1: Magnin; Mr. John hat. Extra-lighting effects, both pages. Tiffany jewels; Charles of the Ritz “Miss Rose” lipstick.
A Photographer’s Scrapbook
1984

In the mid-1980s St. Martin’s Press published an overview of Dahl-Wolfe’s photography, accompanied by her description of the selected images. On pages 88-89 she comments on “Mike’s” (Meyer’s) contributions to the backgrounds of her photo shoots, specifically referencing the April 1958 Harper’s spread he helped to create.
Photograph here

At my New York studio, 1952. Everyone—assistance, relatives, Mike—help to create backgrounds.

At "The Five Market" with Elisa Arte, paintings, in the early 1950s. Mike had some meaningful experiments for me he use in my backgrounds.

I was always, when I learned how to do my own name in Chinese, the Bazaar gave me four pages to do it color. In 1952, suddenly I thought of Calligraphy, so I looked over the characters that I knew and chose the ones that seemed the best in the given spaces. One character turned out to mean "worries," but I couldn't resist using the fascinating word, so I used it and used it. The model seemed perfectly tranquil during the sitting; among the worries.

A Chinese portrait was most delightful in Chinese, the Bazaar gave me four pages to be in color. It was Spring and suddenly I thought of Calligraphy; so I looked over the characters that I knew and chose the ones that seemed the best in the given spaces. One character turned out to mean "worries," but I couldn't resist using the fascinating word, so I used it and used it. The model seemed perfectly tranquil during the sitting; among the worries.
Exhibition program
1980

This program was issued to visitors at the opening reception of Louise Dahl-Wolfe’s Cheekwood exhibition in the summer of 1980.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
Chapter Five:
Manhattan,
Europe, New Jersey,
& Nashville
1948 – 1979

In the decade after World War II, Louise became renowned for her bold, stylish imagery, that helped to define the field of fashion photography. In turn, Meyer produced backdrops for her shoots, managed her business affairs, and continued to make art, unfettered by financial considerations.

With an apartment and photo studio in Manhattan, the Wolfs purchased a country retreat in the late 1940s. Dubbed “The Creamery,” the former dairy in Frenchtown, New Jersey, was transformed into a large studio where Meyer continued his artistic journey. Now in his early fifties, Wolfe turned his attention to the medium of sculpture. Working prodigiously, his pieces were many and varied as he molded, carved, and welded in plaster, wood, ceramic, and bronze. The forms were often stylized, in the spirit of Modernists such as Henry Moore, but were objectively figurative.

While experimenting with sculpture, Wolfe continued painting, working in Europe when he accompanied Louise there on photography shoots. Influenced by Expressionism and Surrealism, his realist style gave way to exaggerated figures, organic shapes, and bold colors. This late work is imaginative, but not abstract. The playful and sometimes mysterious themes were likely a product of the forward-looking post-war culture in which Wolfe lived.

In November 1979 Wolfe returned to Middle Tennessee with a lifetime retrospective sponsored by the Nashville Artist Guild. As a reviewer of the time summed it up: “To see the whole array of Wolfe’s work is to view the historic progression of contemporary art. One sees there the transition of style, and the impact of influence as artists reflected the changes about them.” This observation remains true today as the art of Meyer Wolfe continues to evoke time and place in the art history of America.
Meyer assisted Louise on many of her photography trips abroad during the 1940s and 1950s. This scene from the Parisian house of fashion designer Christian Dior was likely sketched on location.

*Courtesy of Cheekwood Estate & Gardens*
Dior’s Workroom - Paris, Oil on canvas, 1951

Based on the previous charcoal sketch, this subsequent painting colorfully presents the Christian Dior seamstresses at work.

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
Conversation (The Socialists), Oil on canvas, 1951

With a whimsical nod to the cafés of Europe, Wolfe liked to call this painting, “The Socialists.”

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
Untitled
Wood
c. 1970

Evoking classical ruins, this sculpture was exhibited several times in the 1970s – most notably at his 1979 retrospective.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
**Untitled**  
Wood  
c. 1970

A larger example of Wolfe’s use of exaggerated form, the organic figures of this vertical sculpture appear to be wearing crowns.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
The Shawl
Oil on canvas
1948

The story behind The Shawl remains a mystery, but the stylized portrait is an example of Wolfe’s new direction as he moved away from the American Regionalist style.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
To My Beloved
Pastel
1958

Meyer gave this drawing to Louise to mark their 30th wedding anniversary. Despite a few difference through the years, the couple were ever devoted to one another.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
**Untitled**  
Wood relief  
c. 1960

This relief sculpture by Wolfe is a good example of Wolfe’s later fascination with exaggerated organic forms.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*
The Girls
Oil on canvas
1961

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
One and All II, Oil on canvas, 1972

Produced in a series advocating social harmony, this painting of four diverse profiles is a colorful glimpse into Meyer Wolfe's gentle wish for a better world.

Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum
With this 1979 retrospective, Meyer Wolfe's artistic journey arrived full circle. Tennessee was the site of his first one artist show in 1928, and the Nashville Artist Guild had featured him in their first exhibition in 1940. Some of Wolfe’s most striking work was inspired by Nashville. When a journalist asked him about his considerable career, he modestly replied, “Both my painting and lithography give me my greatest source of pain and pleasure… I have had very little acclaim but continue to work nevertheless.” Meyer Wolfe would continue to make art for the sake of art until his passing on June 9, 1984.
Untitled (Mother and Child)  
Composite materials and paint  
c. 1960  

Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe
**Untitled**  
*(Female with Upraised Clasped Hands)*  
Mahogany  
1952

Handcrafted in natural proportion, this seemingly elated figure is an early example of Wolfe’s three dimensional art.

*Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum*
This bronze portrait of Louise was among the works displayed at the Wolfe’s country retreat in Frenchtown, New Jersey.

*Courtesy of Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence K. Wolfe*