

# DORSET HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## *The Collection Notebook*

**“[Elsewhere] you have to make your own composition —  
Nature has been uncooperative everywhere but Vermont.”**

*Elsa Bley*

**Elsa Wilhemina Bley**

March 10, 1903 – July 21, 1990

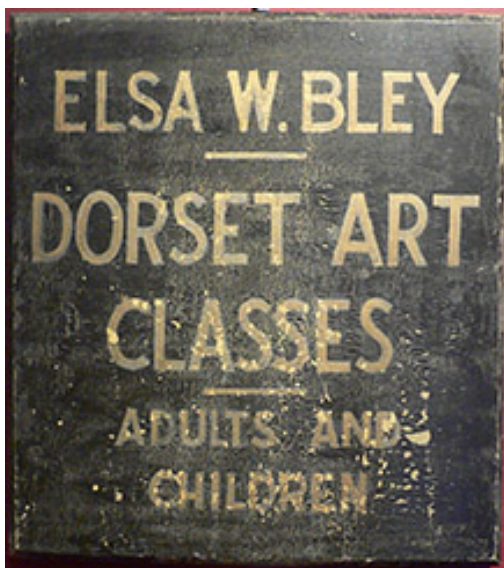
Elsa Bley was born in New York City, the only child of George and Sophie (Munch) Bley.

Her grandfather was a German immigrant and sculptor of architectural pieces. Her father owned and operated a Manhattan apothecary, and died when Elsa was still young.

Elsa studied at the Grand Central Art School and the Art Students League of New York, under George Luks and John Sloan. She and her mother moved to Scarsdale in 1932, where Elsa taught classes under the auspices of the Scarsdale Art Guild. She began summering in Dorset in 1938, and moved here permanently in 1945.

In Vermont, she became very active in the artist community. For four decades she taught art students in her home and at the Southern Vermont Art Center. She painted portraits, and rendered many local landscapes in watercolor.

When Elsa passed away, she bequeathed her home to the Dorset Historical Society, which moved into Bley House in 1991.



Art Classes Sign  
paint on wood, c. 1938



Whither Youth? (Detail)  
watercolor, c. 1960

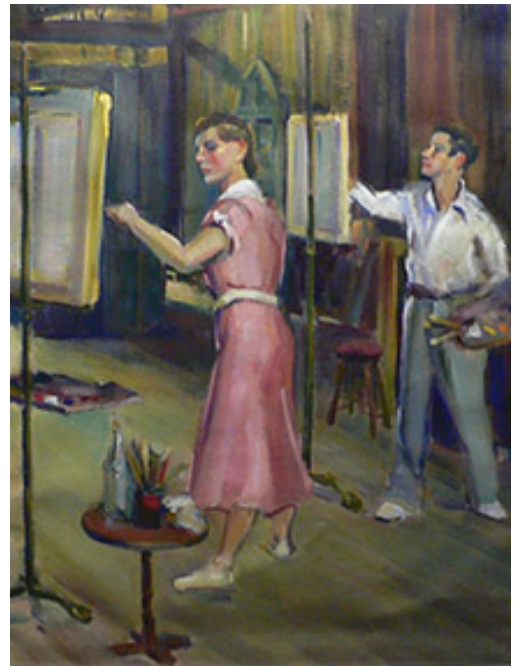
Donated by Linda McGinness, 2014.008.1

Bequeathed by Elsa Bley, 1994.711.00



The Old Cattle Tree  
watercolor, c. 1960

Bequeathed by the Estate of Elsa Bley,  
2007.067.00



Art Students (Detail)  
oil on canvas, c. 1950 - 1960

Museum Purchase, 1995.025.12



Old Man  
oil on canvas, 1932

Museum Purchase, 1995.043.00



Village Carpenter  
oil on canvas, 1940

Museum Purchase, 1995.042.00



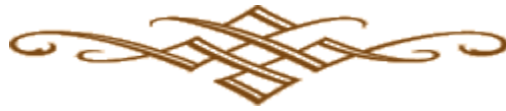
Country Road  
watercolor, c. 1938 – 1960

Museum Purchase, 1995.040.00



Dorset/East Ruppert Road  
watercolor, c. 1938 – 1990

Museum Purchase, 1995.041.00



**Dorset Historical Society**  
PO Box 52 · Route 30 at Kent Hill Road  
Dorset, VT 05251 USA · 802-867-0331  
E-mail: [info@dorsetvhistory.org](mailto:info@dorsetvhistory.org)