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Robert Fishko, *Director*

ISABEL BISHOP
(1902–1988)

Girl Reading, 1935

oil on masonite

10 1/8 x 8 1/2 inches

signed lower right "*Isabel Bishop*"

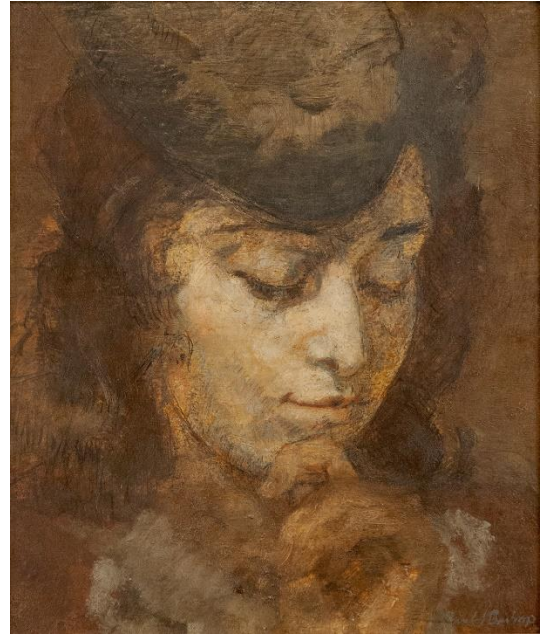
Provenance

The Artist

Midtown Galleries, New York, NY

Robert Vergobbi, New York, NY

Private Collection, Salisbury, MA



Note

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, **Isabel Bishop** (1902-1988) arrived in New York in 1918 at the age of 16, where she studied illustration and painting. In 1926, she established her studio in Union Square near Fourteenth Street where she became enamored with the personal stories of the individuals who loitered in the park or passed through the neighborhood, which at the time was one of the busiest commercial and entertainment districts in the city. Bishop's work focused on the distinctly urban subject matter of the area. Shop girls, straphangers, laborers, and derelicts became her models as they traversed; Bishop captured their motions and gestures with her extraordinary technical skill and keen sense of observation.

Bishop was the foremost female of the Fourteenth Street artists, known for their social realist subjects. Bishop portrayed ordinary people with sensitivity and dignity, often monumentalizing her figures within barely defined contexts.

Girl Reading, painted in 1935, captures a young woman in a quiet moment of reverie, perhaps on her lunch break from one of the three major department stores located in Union Square at the time. The painting is exemplary of Bishop's admiration for the working women of the area, a subject that brought the artist recognition and is mirrored in her own achievements.

Bishop taught at the Art Students League as the only female full-time instructor from 1936 to 1937 and also at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She received awards and prizes including an American Academy of Arts and Letters award (1943), an award for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts presented by President Jimmy Carter (1979), and several honorary doctorates. She was the first woman to hold an executive position in the National Institute of Arts and Letters when she became vice-president in 1946.