

# An entertaining look at how snow is portrayed in Syracuse art on display at OHA (Review)



In this painting, titled "Cooperdale Poultry Farm, 1924," Jason Cooper-King portrays his ancestors standing amid the snow-covered buildings of the family's poultry farm located on Howlett Hill Road in Marcellus. The photograph that inspired the painting hangs nearby.

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on January 14, 2015 at 9:38 AM, updated January 14, 2015 at 9:39 AM

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Snow. If you live in Syracuse, it's a word, a condition and an inconvenience that defines your existence for much of the year. A "normal" year's snowfall measures in at approximately 123 inches, but there have been years when it has pushed the 200 inch mark. Most of us figure out ways to cope with the snow; either by embracing it or escaping it. Whatever your coping mechanism might be, it's a fact of Upstate New York life.

A small, but entertaining exhibition of 30 works by 18 Syracuse-area artists, on view at the Onondaga Historical Association, demonstrates the many ways in which artists have found beauty in this fundamental element of our lives. Titled, "Snowy Splendor: Winter Scenes of Onondaga County," the show includes watercolor and oil paintings and lots of photography. Some of the artists capture familiar landmarks transformed by snow, others portray the serene beauty of a fresh snowfall and others depict the simple acts of going about one's business during the long winter.

A sampling of the show's works that are outlined below suggests that landmarks are the favored subject matter, with Oakwood Cemetery and the Rose Garden at Thornden Park generating the most interest. Photographer Andrea Hall shows three color photos titled, "Chapel at Oakwood Cemetery," "Cross at Oakwood Cemetery," and "Winter at Oakwood Cemetery." The pieces highlight the architectural beauty of the cemetery, which is enhanced by the added texture and color of a fresh snowfall. Jean Smolo's black and white photos of the Rose Garden at Thornden Garden provide a different perspective on a place known for its summer beauty. In "Archway and Path Trellises," she captures the simple shapes of the arches as they stand covered in snow awaiting next season's blooms. "Thornden Park Rose Garden" provides a similar stark view of the gardens as the rose bushes seem diminished under the burden of snow.

Other familiar landmarks captured by photographers William Goodwin and Dean Robert Kolts include "Clinton Square at Christmas," and "Clark Reservation State Park," respectively. Evelyn Fiorenza's oil painting depicts the "Salt Museum" at Onondaga Lake Park after a heavy snow fall. The walkway to the building's entrance is framed by snow banks and the building is bathed in the warm yellow glow of moonlight.



[View full size](#) Joan Applebaum's painting titled,

"Leave Only Footprints," is included in an exhibition of winter-themed works on view at the Onondaga Historical Association. The show, titled "Snowy Splendor: Winter Scenes of Onondaga County," remains on view through March 15.

Other artists captured the serenity of a fresh snow. Wendy Harris' mixed media piece portrays a row of houses on a city street covered in a fresh snow; lights sparkle from within houses and there's not a soul on the street. Tom Hussey's painting titled "Onondaga Snow," depicts a solitary building obscured behind a powdery veil of snow while stoically waiting out the season's latest accumulation. Karen Kozicki's delicate photo on linen titled, "Snow on Tree," is a portrait of snow-laden tree that seems to fade within its frame like so many past winters from our memories.

Only a couple of artists interject the figure into their pieces. Jason Cooper-King's stylized portrait of his ancestors, inspired by an accompanying 1924 photograph, portrays a group of family members obviously comfortable with the snow that surrounds them on the family's poultry farm. The painting,

titled "'Cooperdale Poultry Farm, 1924," represents the family farm on Howlett Hill Road in Marcellus as it stood almost a century ago. In the watercolor titled, "On the Towpath (Erie Canal)." Joan Applebaum captures a solitary cross country skier cutting a path along the Erie Canal and in "Leave Only Footprints," she depicts the ghostly remains of a walk through the snow.

In addition to the paintings, the exhibition also features wintery memorabilia from OHA's permanent collection, including a full-length double breasted raccoon coat, an unusual double-handled metal shovel, an old wooden shovel used to clear the sidewalks in front of the old Dey Brothers store and a red sled.

### **The Details**

**What:** "Snowy Splendor: Winter Scenes of Onondaga County"

**Where:** Onondaga Historical Association, 321 Montgomery Street in Syracuse

**When:** Through March 15

**Admission:** Free, although donations are appreciated

**Hours:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday to Friday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

**Info:** [www.cnyhistory.org](http://www.cnyhistory.org) or 428-1864