

This is a portrait of Moira from 1946, by kinetic sculptor George Rickey. Below is a letter Moira wrote to his son Stuart in 2002. Moira had given the portrait to Louise but after Louise's death she donated it to the Oakland Museum. I believe she did not like the picture, or at least the representation of herself, although I think she admired the artistry. I spent quite some time trying to find a decent photograph of the portrait, but this blurry one was the best I can do; Moira kept info about the portrait and the donation but not a photograph of it! Perhaps other interested researchers would have more patience than I.



2020-01-20 Deborah Dethier

"Dear Stuart, I read about the death of your father only recently, and I was saddened but not surprised, as I knew generally what his age was. I was pleased to learn that you live in the area so that I could send my sympathy and tell you a bit about one of your father's earlier works.

When your dad taught at Groton he became a good friend of my husband, Lawrence van B Nichols who was a student. Their friendship continued through Larry's college and post-college years and then the 2nd world war years. Larry and I were married in 1942, and Larry went overseas in Dec., 1942, and didn't come home until late 1945. During that time George wrote us that he would like to paint my portrait as a wedding gift. After the war, we bought some property in Weston, Mass., and started a small house. George visited us there several times (he made me a lettuce 'drier' from a coat hanger during one weekend; during another he agreed to illustrate a translation of the Odyssey by another of Larry's friends, but I don't think it ever happened. I remember only the Chekhov illustrations). Later that summer (1946) we visited him - and your mother - on the Cape, and George painted my portrait. Larry read aloud to us, John Hershey's Hiroshima from the New Yorker, before publication as a book, and I became increasingly morose. Despite that, it is a splendid picture; and we treasured it and kept it with us where ever we were. Shortly thereafter we went to live in SE Asia and returned to the US in the 50's, settling in the Bay Area. Although we all tried to keep in touch, we saw your father only once or twice after that. I recall the retrospective at the old SF MOMA but can't recall other times. Larry has been dead several years, and I have lived in a retirement community in Oakland for a few years. The first of this year I gave the portrait to the Oakland Museum, and I wanted to tell you that the Oakland Museum now has both the "Two Red Lines" and the portrait. I don't think it's on view yet, but Mr. Lin-- (?) plans to hang it at some point - after reframing, etc.

I think your father is well represented in this area, and I'm pleased. He was a very gifted, fascinating man and I feel privileged to have known him. I hadn't know of your mother's death until I saw the NYT obituary for your father. I'm sorry he outlived her. Please give my best wishes to all your family.

Ever yours, Moira Nichols"