



## **“Sealine-1”**

*Oil on wood panel, 48 ½ ” x 48 ½ ”*

**Joseph W. Pember**

United States, 1922-2009

*Unknown source of acquisition, 1970s*

Joseph Willard Pember was born in Bangor, Maine in 1922, and graduated with a B.A. in world history from the University of Georgia in 1943. After serving in the Army Infantry, he returned to the University of Georgia, where he studied under Lamar Dodd and graduated with an M.F.A in 1947. He came to Valdosta State College as an Assistant Professor of Art in 1948, where he remained until 1980, retiring with the rank of Professor Emeritus of Art.

One of his former students, Robert Leedy, a 1979 VSC graduate and successful artist, has vivid recollections of his classes with Mr. Pember:

“Mr. Pember was a big proponent of plein aire painting and his watercolor classes were usually full during Spring Quarter. Like many of the VSU philosophy classes during springtime, the majority of Mr. Pember’s were conducted outside. Nothing made me happier than a beautiful, sunny, spring morning where I was painting watercolors en plein aire.”<sup>1</sup>

But the classes didn’t just paint outdoors on the lawns of the campus; in discussing an early work of his titled Water Lillies I, Mr. Leedy remembers: “We trekked out to a small swamp in South Georgia and painted water lillies that were just starting to bloom. I remember ants crawling across my paper and bees drowning in my mixing water.”<sup>2</sup> For the subject of an interior still life, Pember made the unusual choice of eggs and lit them with studio lights; the bored young Leedy chose to depict them in bold abstract colors, and Pember loved the result.

The canvas we own, “Sealine-1”, is a large abstract oil painting on canvas dating from the 1970s of a seascape probably done en plein aire, quite possibly in Maine, where his father’s family was from, or perhaps on the coast of Georgia or Florida. It is a strong painting, full of the energy of the sea and wind, and the predominant colors are blue and black, with lesser touches of white and green.

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1. “New Print Available: ‘West Hall’”, Robert Leedy Watercolors: The World According to Me, 17 February 2010. Web. 20 June 2013.

2. “Water Lillies I”, Robert Leedy Watercolors: The World According to Me, 1 January 1995. Web. 20 June 2013.