

At the time of my introduction to the Kilham family Aline was a well known painter in Boston, where her works had been exhibited twice. Her main interest was flower painting but not the literal style of still life--arranged vases of flowers in a conventional interior setting. Her style was freer and more abstract, a more personal and creative depiction of the essential qualities of her subjects--an entirely original approach to flower painting. She had also done some portrait painting in a style which was influenced, perhaps, by her mother and Andre Lotte, her french teacher. She continued her painting after we were married until this activity was limited for a while by maternal responsibilities in a growing family, but she never stopped painting entirely. Another important facility of Aline's, which grew to a creative art in later years, was a fundamental concern with her immediate environment--the house in which we lived. This concern involved all the objects with which we were surrounded, the furniture and decor of our rooms. She was not a decorator in the traditional sense; the talent she had was the ability to make the place in which we lived exceptionally beautiful, pleasant and convenient.

Another manifestation of this talent was the pleasure Aline got from constructing an elaborate doll's house in Winnetka after Steve was born. She first began model building by creating miniature rooms in two orange crates, which in those days were partitioned wooden boxes. I took pity on her and built a two-

story house out of plywood with a staircase to the second floor, double-hung windows and paneled front and back doors. The front and the roof of the house were removable, and the proportions were odd, but at least it was better than orange crates. We took the house with us to Santa Fe, where it was stored in the garage and generally forgotten as Aline became more preoccupied with painting and the children; years later it was resurrected.

In the meantime, under the influence of abstract expressionism and Betty Parsons, who had become an intimate friend, Aline's painting changed to a more geometrical style prevalent in New York in the fifties. Betty Parsons had a gallery on 57th Street in New York, where she showed Aline's flower paintings and her abstract work. Her abstract paintings were also exhibited at \_\_\_\_\_ . About this time, as an outgrowth of her fascination with doll houses, Aline began to make constructions and arrangements in boxes of assorted, unrelated objects, that when placed together in original relationships became creative and sensitive works of art. Aline had been greatly influenced by Joseph Cornell, who originated this kind of creative construction. Her boxes were exhibited by Betty Parsons and have repeatedly been shown in Santa Fe; they have always been enthusiastically received and have been purchased by many patrons of the arts.

After several years of experimenting with abstract art, Aline returned to her first love, flower painting, which she pursued in both Maine and New Mexico. And with the children grown up and away from home she thought again about the doll's

house that had been collecting dust and dirt in the garage, where it had suffered considerable damage when the boys had set off fire crackers in it. It was brought into her studio, where I repaired the worst damage. For years Aline worked on it; she enlarged and refurnished it, put clapboard on the outside, and wired it for electricity. It was built and furnished in a New England style, that became more elaborate and exquisitely detailed under Aline's loving and imaginative care. Before the New England doll's house was finished she began the construction of an adobe, pueblo-style house, which was a true model in every respect--proportions, architecture and furnishings. It was a typical one story, flat-roofed building constructed on vigas and lateias with fire walls and conales. The furniture was all handmade, Santa Fe style. When completed Aline gave it to the Folk Art Museum in Santa Fe, where it was on exhibit in the lobby for several years and greatly admired. The doll's house was eventually given to the Albuquerque Art Museum. As with any artist, the pleasure Aline derived from these projects was largely in their making.

Following her abstract period Aline's paintings were not entirely of flowers. She also developed a style of dividing the canvas into panels--separated by black or another appropriate color-- in which she painted various objects: a single blossom, a leaf, a shell, berries or a bird's nest. These paintings were very popular and could be more readily sold than she was willing to part with them. Her other works were still life paintings of cups, pots and other vessels reminiscent of the work of the Italian painter Giorgio Morandi.

During our first years in Santa Fe most of my time in

spring was devoted to bird photography, a process that involved much time and effort learning bird's identities and habits and hunting for their nests--the prerequisite to photographing them; making the images <sup>was</sup> the least time consuming part. Aline never went with me on these bird hunts, since it was not a particular interest of hers. Nor did she accompany me on more general excursions whenever she would have had to wait around while I took photographs. However, she did go on trips when the purpose was more social, as on visits to friends in Taos, to Georgia O'Keeffe's studio at Ghost Ranch or in Abiquiu, or even to places of special interest like the mountain villages of Truchas and Trampas. The cultural and human aspects of New Mexico appealed to her more than the natural surroundings. Also, she was more tied down by domestic responsibilities than I. She was able to get away occasionally to New York for more direct contact with the contemporary art world. She loved to go to New York, the dynamic center of art in American, to re-establish contact with her friends in the art world and to gain first hand experience with the most recent art movements. And in those years our family trips to Maine for the summer were a welcome break from the routine of living in Santa Fe.