

Mary Small Einstein was the eldest child and only daughter of Milton I. D. Einstein and his wife Alma Stix Einstein. She grew up in New York, attended Lincoln High School, the Ethical Culture School and the Masters Academy in Dobbs Ferry, New York. She was later admitted to the architectural department of Cornell University. At age 15 Mary made her first tour of Europe and continued to travel extensively. In Paris she took an active part in an American literary group headed by Ernest Hemingway and was often pointed out in the Paris style columns as a woman of great beauty and charm.

After moving to New York City, still a young woman, she entered the field of book illustrating and designed book covers for the firm of Covici Friede Publishers. Clearly, she had already developed her skills as an artist, although it is not certain whether she had formal training or was self taught. In either case, her talent was evident, as seen in the drawings presented here, mostly completed in her late teens.

In 1926, in a letter to her aunt, Alfred Stieglitz says of Mary's work, "Finally the moment came today. I opened your niece's portfolio. How well I knew that they were not to be looked at casually! The drawings are astounding. The painting extraordinary." It was in this same year that a book of poetry by Hebert S. Gorman "Notations for a Chimaera" was published with illustrations by Mary. A review in the May 30, 1926, *New York Times Book Review* notes, "... And if she [the mythical chimaera] is not puffed up with pride at the beautiful and striking portrait as done by Mary Small in the Aubrey Beardsley manner, she will be an ungrateful and ungracious creature indeed."

As a young artist with a career already gaining momentum, Mary decided to attend the Maverick Art Colony the summer of 1927 to study sculpture with Alexander Archipenko. There she was wooed by Russel Wright to assist with his Maverick Theatre, and within a few months they married, likely the best decision Russel Wright ever made.