

Bulletin

OF THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

VOLUME XX • NOVEMBER 1940 • NUMBER 2



AN APOSTLE (ST. JOHN?)
BY JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA, ITALIAN, 1376-1428
Gift of Jacob Heimann, 1940

A Statuette in Wood

by Jacopo della Quercia

JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA (1376-1428), the greatest Sieneese sculptor, is a transitional master, standing between the Gothic and the early Renaissance in a position somewhat similar to Ghiberti in Florence. The flowing movement and the heavy drapery of his figures are still Gothic; their construction and character have the reality and force of the Renaissance; their types present the strong characteristic of the masters of the great age. This, however, does not mean that the art of Jacopo della Quercia is vacillating or, since consisting of different stylistic elements, unharmonious. On the contrary, it is more decided in its forms, clearer in its expression than any other sculpture in Siena; like all great art it is an end in itself.

In temperament Jacopo has been compared with the leading sculptor of the early Gothic period in Italy, Giovanni Pisano; in style, with the greatest exponent of his own age in the North, Claus Sluter, who was slightly older and may have influenced the Sieneese artist. His importance for the Renaissance is indicated by the fact that no less a master than Michelangelo, in his youth, was strongly impressed by the art of Jacopo della Quercia. Like Michelangelo, Jacopo was one-sided as a sculptor, devoting himself almost exclusively to marble sculpture. His best known works, the tomb of Ilaria at Lucca, the Fonte Gaia in Siena and the portal sculptures on S. Petronio in Bologna, are all executed in marble. He differs in this respect from Ghiberti who was many-sided, executing his works in several materials, yet in stylistic comparison Ghiberti appears less forceful and less individual than Jacopo della Quercia.

It has been found in recent years, however, that Jacopo carved occasionally in wood also, a medium rarer among the great Italian sculptors than in the North. They sometimes used this material in making models for large statues which could be easily transported, as for example, in the model of a horse for an equestrian statue acquired by the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1937.¹ Another reason for the use of wood in executing sculptures was that the material was obviously cheaper. When the cathedral commission at S. Gimignano ordered the wonderful Annunciation group from Jacopo della Quercia to be executed in wood, the probable reason was that they could not afford a more expensive material. For a similar

Published monthly, October to May inclusive, at the Detroit Institute of Arts of the City of Detroit, 5200 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Detroit, Michigan, under date of October 29, 1934. Subscription price \$1.00 per year.

reason Jacopo — when he was only twenty years of age — may have received the order for the equestrian statue to be placed in the Cathedral at Siena, which was made out of wood, hemp and stucco, as Vasari, who admired it greatly, tells us in his life of Jacopo. It was the first equestrian statue of the Renaissance. Unfortunately, it was destroyed in the sixteenth century.

The imposing polychromed wood statue of the Enthroned Madonna in the Louvre, which is often wrongly given to the school of Jacopo instead of to the master himself, is in size and composition so closely related to his large marble Madonna above the portal of S. Petronio in Bologna that we can assume it was made as a trial figure for this statue, in order to judge its appearance in place as the final effect could not be gained from the statue viewed on the ground. A wood figure could be more easily lifted up and tried in its place than a marble or even a clay figure.

The statuette of an apostle,² probably St. John, generously presented to the Museum by Mr. Jacob Heimann of New York, is still more likely a model, as Jacopo della Quercia is not known to have executed works in small size. That it is his own work can hardly be doubted. It has the extraordinary plastic force of his works, attained by the mass of drapery thrown forward in a strong movement of the body, and the characteristic recurring curve at the bottom of the drapery which leaves one foot free. It has his compact style and unsophisticated facial type and, although it is small and not too well preserved, it impresses one at once as the invention of a great master.

W. R. VALENTINER

¹Accession number: 37.176. Gift of Mr. Edsel B. Ford. Published in *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Italian Gothic and Early Renaissance Sculpture*, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1938, No. 30, ill.

²Accession number: 40.57. Height: 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

Two Still Life Paintings From Haarlem

THE collection of paintings was enriched this fall by a very spirited and cheerful picture by Pieter Claesz (1597/98-1661), one of the great still life painters of seventeenth century Holland.¹ These adjectives, "spirited and cheerful," may seem oddly applied to a still life; for still life, though very popular among painters, is often looked on by others as a limited and dry form of art. The fact is, however,

that an artist of lively temperament will make any subject expressive; and a vigorous mind may discover in inanimate objects things very worthy of attention.

Pieter Claesz was a leader of the first generation of still life in seventeenth century Dutch painting. He was one of the remarkable group of painters who developed in Haarlem under the stimulus of, though not in imitation of, Frans Hals. Dutch still life began, a generation or two before his life time, in what the Dutch call a *kitchen piece*, which was, as its name implies, a big picture of a kitchen crowded with all the materials for an enormous banquet and with cooks and maidservants bustling about. This entertaining and genial subject was



STILL LIFE

BY

PIETER CLAESZ

DUTCH, 1597/98-1661

Gift of the Founders Society, 1940

gradually simplified until by Pieter Claesz's time the figures had disappeared and the feast was reduced to a glass of beer, herring and rolls of bread, materials for a hearty Dutch breakfast, or a supper or dessert like the present picture. But Pieter Claesz, spurred on by the wonderful still life details of food and gleaming tableware in Hals's great banquet pictures, added an instinct for splendor and a noble esthetic understanding of light to the simple pleasure of contemplating a tasty snack of food. The dishes in this picture are the massive and magnificent glass and silver of the seventeenth century, set on a table in strong slanting afternoon light. Pieter Claesz painted them with such a free, rich touch, such plasticity of form, and such an understanding of the brilliant light that glows and sparkles in dancing reflection from one object to another, that the whole picture lights up like a living thing and still, after three hundred years, gives off the warmth of the painter's delight. The poetry of splendid, simple things contains an esthetic pleasure of no slight order; nor is this kind of poetry so common in the history of art as one might suppose.

The Museum owns another remarkable still life by a contemporary of Hals and Pieter Claesz in Haarlem, given to the Museum by Mr. Edsel B. Ford some years ago, which has never been described in the BULLETIN. It is a *Still Life*² by

Claes van Heussen, a rare and distinguished Haarlem painter who is known to have been active only in the years 1628 to 1630. He is remembered for two things. He alone in Haarlem continued the large scale *kitchen piece* type of still life into the best period of Dutch art; and he painted with Frans Hals a big picture of a market stall, Van Heussen doing the vegetables and Hals, the market girl. As there is no other instance of Hals's collaboration with another painter, this is in itself sufficiently remarkable.

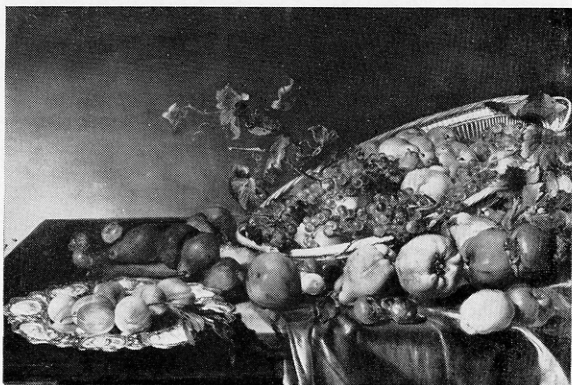
Our painting, though smaller than this famous picture, is still on a larger scale than Pieter Claesz's work. It retains the cheerful profusion of the *kitchen piece*,

STILL LIFE

BY

CLAES VAN HEUSSEN
DUTCH, ACTIVE 1628-30

Gift of Edsel B. Ford, 1931



crossed with the instinct for splendor and elegance that was growing at this time in the proud, independent spirit of the Dutch republic. Beside the plain wicker basket holding the grapes and pears is a splendid silver dish filled with peaches. But as in the case of the Pieter Claesz, it is the peculiar and unmistakable poetry of this picture that constitutes its value. The fruits, silver dish and velvet table cover are painted with a rich, firm touch in soft autumnal colors, animated by the lights that shine on their glossy surfaces. The glowing fruit pours over the table top as if streaming from a horn of plenty, in a composition which, at once profuse and clear, animated and sensitive, embodies a genial and enthusiastic spirit that we can easily associate with a collaborator of Frans Hals.

E. P. RICHARDSON

¹*Still Life with Wine Glass and Silver Beaker, Orange and Nuts.* Accession number: 40.129. Panel: H. 17 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; W. 21 inches. Signed on the blade of the knife with the monogram and date: PC 1644. Gift of the Founders Society, 1940.

²*Still Life with a Basket of Grapes, Pears, Plums and Quinces, and a Dish of Peaches.* Accession number: 31.308. Canvas: H. 30 inches; W. 42 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Attribution by F. Schmidt-Degener. Gift of Edsel B. Ford, 1931.

Michigan Artists Exhibition

THE ANNUAL EXHIBITION for Michigan Artists opened on Tuesday evening, November 12, midway in the month which is being dedicated throughout the nation to the encouragement of American art. "American Art in Every American Home" is the slogan of this movement. By the decision of the contributing artists the selection of entries for this exhibition was placed in the hands of an out-of-town jury consisting of Mr. Charles Burchfield, nationally known painter, and Mr. Henry Sayles Francis, Curator of Paintings at the Cleveland Museum of Art, who, from the large number of entries submitted, chose for exhibition 202 paintings in oil, water colors, and graphic arts, and 28 pieces of sculpture, a total of 230 entries by 154 artists, a somewhat larger number of entries and artists than last year.

Prior to the opening of the exhibition, the jury and representatives of the donors of the various awards and purchase prizes distributed more than \$1200 as follows:

The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society Prize of \$200 for the best work in the exhibition by a resident Michigan artist, regardless of subject or medium: Raymond George Hitchcock, for his oil painting, *Afternoon Shift*.

The Anna Scripps Whitcomb Prize of \$100 for the best painting or sculpture exemplifying traditional or academic qualities: Sarkis Sarkisian, for his oil painting, *Wine and Grapes*.

The Friends of Modern Art Prize of \$100, given by Robert H. Tannahill, for the best painting exemplifying modern tendencies in art: Harold Cohn, for his oil painting, *Sunflowers*.

The Walter C. Piper Prize of \$50 for the best figure subject in oil on canvas painted during the year 1940: Francis de Erdely, for his oil painting, *Daily Bread*.

The Mrs. Albert Kahn Prize of \$50 for the best water color in the exhibition: Zoltan Sepeshy, for his water color, *Wheat*.

The W. J. Hartwig and E. Raymond Field Purchase Prize of \$200: Rebecca S. Viger, for her oil painting, *The Harvest*.

The Mrs. George Kamperman Purchase Prize of \$100: Carlos Lopez, for his water color, *The Graveyard*.

The Lillian Henkel Haass Purchase Prize of \$100 for the acquisition of a work for the permanent collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts: Jay Boorsma, for his water color, *Michigan Lake*.

The Mrs. Owen R. Skelton Purchase Prize of an amount determined by the price of the work selected: Sarkis Sarkisian, for his oil painting, *Wine and Grapes*.

The Mrs. Ralph H. Booth Purchase Prize of an amount determined by the price of the work selected: Walt Speck, for his ceramic sculpture, *Buffalo Resting*.

The Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Meinzinger Purchase Prize of \$100: Carl A. Hall, for his water color, *And Life Continued*.

The Sarah M. Sheridan Purchase Prize of \$50: Guy Palazzola, for his oil painting, *Head*.

The Scarab Club Medal and Cash Prize: Charles Culver, for his oil painting, *Market Day*.

The Hal H. Smith Print Purchase Prize of \$50 for the acquisition of a print for the permanent collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts: Mildred E. Williams, for her lithograph, *Winter in Connecticut*.

Honorable Mention for Painting: John L. Pappas, for his two oil paintings, *Baby Sunflowers* and *Gladioli and Yellow Cloth*.

Honorable Mention for Painting: Carl A. Hall, for his two water colors, *And Life Continued* and *The Passing of Summer*, and his oil painting, *Thanatopsis*.

Honorable Mention for Sculpture: Helen Brett Babbington, for her sculpture, *Head of Jay Clark*.

Museum Notes

JOHN S. NEWBERRY has been appointed Curator of Alger House to succeed Perry T. Rathbone, now Director of the City Art Museum of St. Louis. Mr. Newberry was graduated from Harvard University in 1933 and continued his studies of art history at Harvard (1933-34) and at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London (1934-35). Since 1938 he has been honorary Curator of Prints at the Detroit Institute of Arts and has assisted in the work of other departments. His training, previous association with the Museum, and broad interests make him well prepared to take over the supervision of the branch museum of the Detroit Institute of Arts, devoted to the arts of the Italian Renaissance, with its galleries for changing exhibitions of all periods and all the arts.

NATIONAL ART WEEK, November 25 through December 1, will climax a month's special art activity in Michigan with three outstanding exhibitions to be held simultaneously in Detroit. These have been arranged by the local committee for National Art Week, under the direction of John D. Morse of the museum staff, who is state and local chairman. An Exhibition for Michigan Craftsmen will be held at the Museum during Art Week, offering for the first time a comprehensive display of crafts either designed or executed in Michigan. Entries have been selected for display in this exhibition or at the Detroit Artists Market, the city's permanent agency for the sale of local arts and crafts. For the average buyer who wishes to acquire an original work of art, a jury has selected an Exhibition of Popularly Priced Pictures, on view during Art Week at the Scarab Club. Price limits for entries have been set at seventy-five dollars for oils, and fifty dollars for prints, drawings and water colors. A group of outstanding portrait painters will be represented in the first exhibition of the Detroit Professional Portrait Painters during Art Week at the John Hanna Galleries, where prospective portrait commissioners may have a survey of the best available talent. These exhibitions are arranged not only to reveal to all the wealth of Michigan and Detroit art but also to encourage the fulfillment of the slogan of National Art Week: "American Art in Every American Home."

HOURS OF ADMISSION

The Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Avenue at Kirby, is open free daily except Mondays and Christmas Day. Visiting hours: Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 1 to 5 and 7 to 10; Wednesday, 1 to 5; Saturday, 9 to 5; Sunday, 2 to 6. The Russell A. Alger House, 32 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms, a branch museum for Italian Renaissance art and temporary exhibitions, is open free daily except Mondays from 1 to 5. Telephones: Detroit Institute of Arts, Columbia 0360; Alger House, TUxedo 2-3888; Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society, Columbia 4274.

Calendar of Events For November

EXHIBITIONS

- October 18 through November 10: *Ancient Chinese Ritual Bronzes from the Collection of Mr. C. T. Loo of New York.*
- October 20 through November 17 (Alger House): *French Eighteenth Century Silver from the Jacques Helft Collection of Paris.*
- October 20 through December 1: *Peasant Arts of Czecho-Slovakia.*
- November 5 through December 1 (Alger House): *Paintings and Drawings by Darrel Austin.*
- November 12 through December 10: *Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists.*
- November 15 through December 15: *Japanese Colored Wood Block Prints from the Collection of Mr. Raymond A. Bidwell of Springfield, Massachusetts.*
- November 25 through December 1: *National Art Week Sales Exhibition for Michigan Craftsmen.*

TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES

Given by the museum staff in cooperation with the Archaeological Society of Detroit and the Detroit Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, Tuesday evenings at 8:30 in the lecture hall of the Art Institute. Admission free.

- November 5: *The Cultural Heritage of Old Japan*, by James Marshall Plumer, Lecturer on Far Eastern Art, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- November 12: No lecture. Opening of Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists.
- November 19: *Japanese No Plays and Their Costumes*, by Adèle Coulin Weibel, Curator of Textiles.
- November 26: *Greek Sculptures from the Sea*, by Homer A. Thompson, Assistant Professor of Classical Archaeology, University of Toronto.
- December 3: *Colored Wood Block Prints of Japan*, by Isabel Weadock, Curator of Prints.

SHORT COURSES BY THE CURATORS

Friday afternoons at 3:30 in the study room. These afternoon meetings during the year will be devoted to short courses of related lectures for those who wish to gain a more intimate knowledge of the fields covered. The lectures will be illustrated with lantern slides and will afford a background for further enjoyment of the museum exhibits.

MASTER PAINTERS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE. Four lectures by Francis W. Robinson on the works of representative artists of the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries in Italy. Admission charge: \$1.00; for members of the Founders Society, \$.50; single lectures \$.50 (members \$.25).

- November 1: *Leonardo da Vinci, the Universal Genius.*
- November 8: *Raphael and Michelangelo — Poets and Painters.*
- November 15: *The High Renaissance in Venice.*
- November 29: *Baroque and Rococo: Caravaggio and Tiepolo.*

ISLAMIC ART AND HISTORY. Eight lectures by Adèle Coulin Weibel, to be given during January and February. Dates and subjects will be announced later.

SHORT COURSES BY THE MUSEUM INSTRUCTORS

These courses are free to the public.

THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN ART, by Joyce Black Gnau on Thursday evenings at 8:30, through November 28, omitting November 21.

ART, THE INDEX OF CIVILIZATION, by John D. Morse on Saturday afternoons at 3:00, through November 30, omitting November 23.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON LECTURES

Given at 2:30 in the galleries, where chairs are provided.

- November 3: *The Ancient Art of Weaving*, by John D. Morse.
- November 10: *Chinese Bronzes*, by Joyce Black Gnau.
- November 17: *A Japanese Screen*, by Marion Leland Heath.
- December 1: *Michigan Arts and Crafts*, by John D. Morse.