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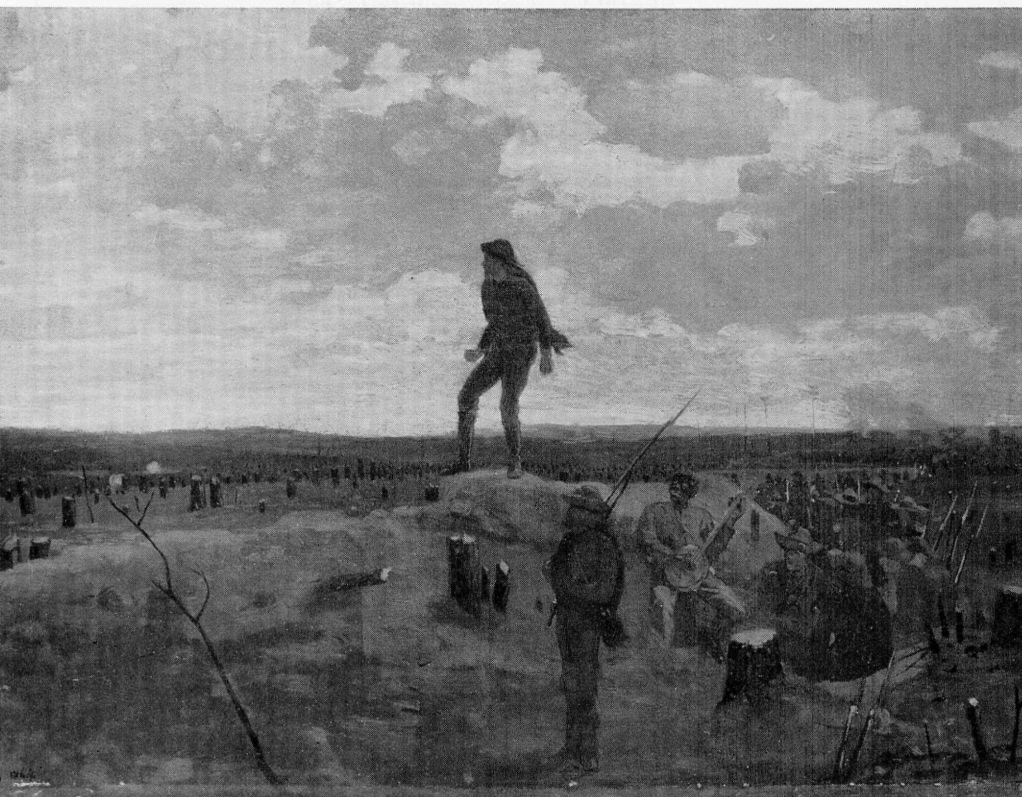
of THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS



DEFIANCE: INVITING A SHOT AT PETERSBURG, VA., 1864,
by WINSLOW HOMER, AMERICAN (1836-1910)
Gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., 1951

MRS. RALPH HARMAN BOOTH

At their meetings of September 24 and October 22, the Arts Commission and the Trustees of the Founders Society adopted unanimously the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Detroit Institute of Arts has lost by the death of Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth one of the major benefactors of the institution, and

WHEREAS, we shall always have a keen sense of the contribution of her late husband to the foundation of this institution in its present form; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Booth has been associated with the Art Institute during her husband's lifetime and by her own interest after his death; and

WHEREAS, we cannot let an interest of more than thirty years pass without permanent record in our minutes;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Arts Commission and the Trustees of the Founders Society hereby express their sense of loss and their sympathy to her family.

NEW ENDOWMENT FUNDS

During the past year the Founders Society trustees have been greatly encouraged by the addition of four significant new endowment funds. Although annual gifts over the past few years have set records for the Society, there have been very few new endowment funds, most of the funds making up the Society's approximate half-million dollar endowment being established twenty years ago or more. It is a great pleasure, therefore, to announce the following additions to the Society's endowment in 1951: Josephine and Ernest Kanzler Fund $29,600 and the Paul McPharlin Memorial Fund (given by his father, Mr. William McPharlin) $5,000.

A General Endowment Fund with a principal of $10,903.75 has been built up from the contributions of 15 different generous citizens, largely through the solicitation efforts of Mr. Ernest Kanzler. The principal contributions to this fund have been: Campbell-Ewald Company $1,000, J. Walter Thompson Company $1,000, William H. Meredith $2,500, Mrs. Ruby Boyer Miller $3,138.75, Mrs. Standish Backus $1,800.

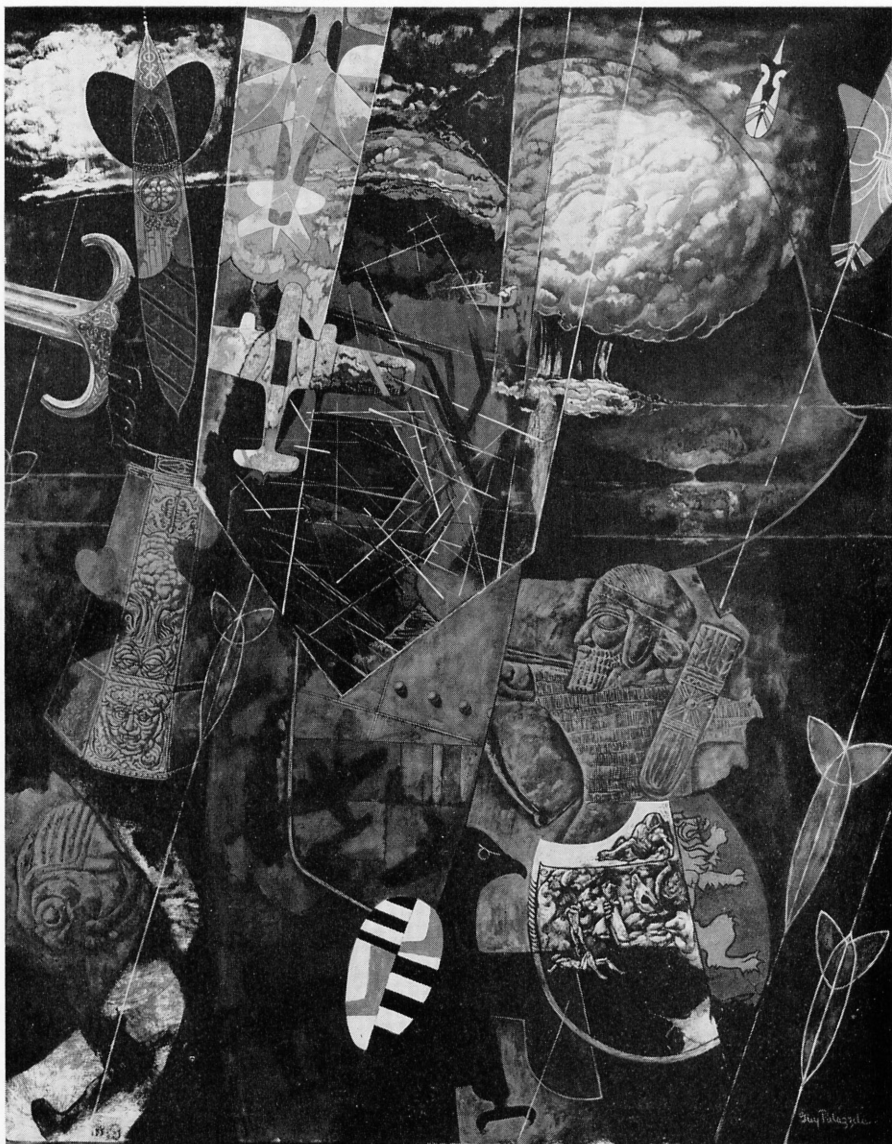
ACQUISITIONS FROM THE 1951 ANNUAL EXHIBITION FOR MICHIGAN ARTISTS

One of the most important and most stimulating of the exhibitions which are presented annually in our galleries is that for Michigan artists. From this exhibition several works are added each year to the Museum's permanent collection of work by Michigan artists through a number of purchase prizes.

A montage which its painter, Guy Palazzola, has titled *Black Knight*[1] received this year's Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society Prize. Mr. Palazzola has created a kind of tapestry of destruction with guided missiles streaking through a composition whose elements are symbols of war. These symbols are drawn from cultures of all periods of time, from antiquity to our atom blasts which cast their festering clouds over a great part of the painting. *Black Knight*'s somber splendor is as disturbing as the hideous extravagance of war itself. The flashes of color on the pervading black ground are like night explosions. The rich symbolism means that, at first encounter, the picture is more intellectually intriguing than it is emotionally moving, though a personal revulsion against the theme is an almost unavoidable result of the cumulative effect of the symbols. Mr. Palazzola lives in Detroit. He has been consistently gaining ground as a painter and draughtsman of dazzling technical skill .

Richard Davis of Saginaw, who received the Henry T. Ewald Prize, has also painted on a battle theme but in a romantic way. Just as the titles of *The Great Battle,*[2] Mr. Davis' picture, and *Black Knight* are different in implications, one being a direct name and the other a symbolic reference, so the pictures themselves contrast distinctly. Mr. Davis has made a picture that evokes a mood through atmospheric effect. The elements of nature seem to be seething in sky and landscape, the company of knights bristles with lances; but the freedom and sweep of the painting are more likely to whip us into a fine flurry of excitement than to cause us to turn away in shame at the refinements of slaughter civilizations have developed.

We might reasonably expect an air of gaiety to prevail in Richard Wilt's *Birthday Cake*[3] and the painting *is* lighter, brighter in color and more fragile in its design construction than either *Black Knight* or *The Great Battle.* But it is expressive of a rather empty joy or a pleasure hidden behind vacant masks. Mr. Wilt has an individual and meticulous way of applying paint to his canvas in small but thick encrustations producing, in this painting, a confectionery effect. This method of working is surely one of the remarkable aspects of the paintings by Mr. Wilt that we have so far seen; it gives his work a delicacy and minuteness that combine paradoxically with the monumental scale of his designs and themes. The artist is living in Ann Arbor. His painting received the Museum Collection Purchase Prize.



BLACK KNIGHT *by* **GUY PALAZZOLA, AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY**
Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society Prize, 1951

Two water color paintings, both by painters working in Detroit, have those delightful characteristics of brilliance and transparency that we customarily associate with the medium. Liselotte Moser's *Nocturne (Cecropias)*,[4] which was awarded the David B. Werbe Memorial Prize, presents the comforting reality of

nature in a manner that is also comforting in its clarity and accuracy. The painting recalls the work of the great painter-naturalist Audubon. Miss Moser's special knowledge of plants and insects and her control of water color are both facts which the painting clearly articulates.

The Old Orchard,[5] one of Wayne L. Claxton's interpretations of the clear clean sweep of the north country he knows so well, is another strictly controlled water color work. Mr. Claxton's painting received the John S. Newberry, Jr., Prize. It is treated in a severely simplified style with the precision of fine architectural detailing.

As the gift of an anonymous donor, *Masqueraders*[6] by Martin Tanner has also come into the museum collection. The painting is a small panel done in muted tones and in the flat decorative mode of masks or modern ballet décor. Mr. Tanner has for several years past been a consistent representative in the exhibition of the lively group of Saginaw painters.

From the print section of the exhibition the museum has received through the award of the Hal H. Smith Memorial Prize the etching by Ralph Scharf of Grand Rapids entitled *Promenade.*[7] The etching has a rich variety of tonal and textural effects, admirably enriching the incisive, rather caustic concept.

The single piece of sculpture acquired this year from the work of Michigan artists is Thomas McClure's *Bird,*[8] given the Mrs. Owen R. Skelton Prize. The sculpture is an irregularly shaped carving in veined alabaster suggestive of the awkward struggles of a snared fowl. The composition is apparently conceived as a series of movements and the form actually appears to move as the eye travels around it. Mr. McClure is working in Ann Arbor.

Needless to say, this group of acquisitions, and the exhibition itself, is specific evidence of the vital part a museum can play in the artistic life of a large

PROMENADE *by* RALPH SCHARF, AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY
Hal H. Smith Memorial Prize, 1951

community and the support it can give to that life through the public spirit of its donors.

A. F. PAGE

[1] Cat. no. 1039. Oil on masonite. Height 40 inches; width 31 inches. Acc. no. 51.166.

[2] Cat. no. 1040. Oil on canvas. Height 40 inches; width 30 inches. Acc. no. 51.167.

[3] Cat. no. 1041. Oil on canvas. Height 39¾ inches; width 29¾ inches. Acc. no. 51.165.

[4] Cat. no. 1042. Water color. Height 21¾ inches; width 21 inches. Acc. no. 51.168.

[5] Cat. no. 1043. Water color. Height 15 inches; width 25 inches. Acc. no. 51.169.

[6] Cat. no. 1044. Oil on masonite. Height 23⅞ inches; width 11¼ inches. Acc. no. 51.172.

[7] Etching. Height 6⅛ inches; width 12¾ inches. Acc. no. 51.170.

[8] Alabaster. Height 12⅛ inches; width 13¼ inches. Acc. no. 51.171.

THREE EARLY WORKS *by* WINSLOW HOMER

Winslow Homer has exceptional interest for us for two reasons. One is that he was an artist of major talent who was in sympathy with, rather than at war with, the perceptions and instincts of the world in which he lived. An error of our times is to suppose that the artist is always and necessarily at war with the vision and feelings of ordinary human beings. There have been great artists, indeed whole great ages of art, when the artist was in instinctive sympathy with his world and used his powers to deepen and enrich the ordinary view of things, to say what all men felt but could not utter. Winslow Homer shared and gave artistic expression to some of the great emotions of his age – the feelings of those who fought the Civil War, who loved the land, who knew the life of the farms and the backwoods and could sympathize with the struggle with the wilderness and the sea that was so great an element in American experience. In addition to his power of imaginative sympathy, Homer as an observer had an unfailing eye for the large movement, the over all character, which gave his works great authority.

As a result, his works have a unique value as documents for American life. They seem to embody something of ourselves, of our tradition of life, as the works of other artists of more subjective or more exclusively esthetic temperaments do not. This quality of seeing and objectifying his world with peculiar power was his from the beginning, in spite of the fact that his own world could not at that time understand his painting. The French impressionists, in the same way, were never more brilliant in their expression of French life than when the French public was blind to their meaning.

Both these aspects of Homer are shown in three works which have recently been given to the museum by two of our most generous donors, Mr. Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., and Mr. Robert H. Tannahill.

WATERING PLANTS *by* WINSLOW HOMER,
AMERICAN (1836-1910)
Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1950

Two water color drawings of a woman in white, reading and watering plants, which are the gift of Mr. Robert H. Tannahill, were preserved until last year in the possession of the artist's family.[1] Nothing could illustrate more clearly Homer's sense for the large movement. Each figure lives, with a gesture that includes the whole figure and its inner mood, like a pair of Tanagra figurines. Yet as products of a master of luminism, they exist and move in air and the glow and shimmer of light.

Mr. Lloyd Goodrich, to whom I am indebted for much information about all three of these pictures, informs me that Mr. Charles L. Homer told him the woman reading was the artist's sister-in-law, Mrs. Arthur B. Homer. The subject of the other might be the same person. The same person is certainly the subject of a water color, *Portrait of a Lady,* also dated 1875, in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Phipps.[2]

During the Civil War Homer served as war artist for *Harper's Weekly.* His sketches were used not only for black and white illustrations in the weekly

FICTION *by* WINSLOW HOMER, AMERICAN (1836-1910)
Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1950

paper but served as material for his earliest important oils. The importance of these paintings as documents for a central episode in the history of this country is increasingly recognized.

I used always to admire one of these, *Defiance: Inviting a Shot at Petersburg, Va., 1864,* in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art as an outstanding example. When the Whitney Museum decided to become a museum of twentieth century art exclusively and consequently to part with everything executed before 1900, we had the good fortune to acquire *Defiance* as the gift of Mr. Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., who thus added one more gift of great distinction to the collection of American art he has built up for us.

The subject is an incident seen by Homer during the last great struggle of the war in Virginia, the siege of Petersburg, which began June 18, 1864, and lasted nine months. A young soldier in the Federal lines, bored by trench warfare, stands on the parapet daring the Confederates to shoot at him. As two Confed-

erate rifles flash across the bleak stubble of no man's land, he throws himself to one side to escape their bullets.

As pure painting this is one of the finest of Homer's early landscapes. The long roll of the horizon, the luminous sky filled with clouds, the tawny Virginia earth devastated by war, are painted with great ease and authority. (There is an undated drawing of the terrain, without the figures, among the Homer drawings in the Cooper Union Museum.) The figure of the soldier, so young, so reckless, so full of life, so vivid in movement, is a little masterpiece of expression. Art and history meet in such a work and from either standpoint it is of intense interest.[3]

E. P. RICHARDSON

[1] Cat. no. 1001. *Fiction.* Black, white and brown wash and pencil on grey paper. Height 10 inches; width 11 inches (sight: H. 8½, W. 6½ in.). Signed lower left: *Homer* 75. Exhibited: New York, Ninth Annual Exhibition of the American Water Color Society, no. 362. Prout's Neck, Century Loan Exhibition in Winslow Homer's Studio, 1936, no. 1. Acc. no. 50.93.
Cat. no. 1002. *Watering Plants.* Black, white and brown wash and pencil on grey paper. Height 14 inches; width 9¼ inches (sight H. 9½, W. 5¼ in.). Signed lower right: *Homer* 74. Exhibited: Prout's Neck, Century Loan Exhibition in Winslow Homer's Studio, 1936, no. 4. Both from the collection of Mrs. Arthur Homer, Prout's Neck, Maine. Acc. no. 50.94. Both the gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1950.

[2] Exhibited Wildenstein, *Winslow Homer,* 1947, no. 48.

[3] Cat. no. 1028. *Defiance: Inviting a Shot at Petersburg, Va., 1864.* Height 12 inches; width 18 inches. Formerly inscribed on the back: *Inviting a Shot Before Petersburg, Va., 1864. W. Homer.* Collections: Frederick S. Gibbs, New York, 1904; Thomas R. Ball, New York, 1919; Knoedler, 1927; Edward Ward McMahon, New York, 1929; Pascal M. Gatterdam, New York, 1931; Macbeth Gallery, 1931; Whitney Museum of American Art, 1950; Knoedler, 1951. References: *The Private Collection of Frederick S. Gibbs, 421 West 22nd Street, New York.* New York, 1899, p. 51, no. 36; *Brush and Pencil,* VIII (July 1901), p. 218; William Howe Downes, *The Life and Works of Winslow Homer,* 1911, p. 48; Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, *American Genre Paintings,* 1936, no. 44; Whitney Museum, New York, *Winslow Homer Centenary,* 1936, no. 1; Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, *Winslow Homer Exhibition,* 1937, no. 1; Forbes Watson, *Winslow Homer,* 1942, p. 56; E. P. Richardson, *American Romantic Painting,* 1944, pl. 210; Lloyd Goodrich, *Winslow Homer,* New York, 1944, pp. 17 and 230. Acc. no. 51.66. Gift of Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., 1951.

GRANDMA'S HEARTHSTONE *by* JOHN HABERLE

For many years there hung in Churchill's, one of Detroit's famous landmarks, a painting by John Haberle called *Grandma's Hearthstone* which is one of the triumphs of American *trompe-l'œil* painting. Presented recently to the Institute by the late C. W. Churchill in memory of his father, it will no doubt recall many pleasant memories in the minds of old Detroiters who saw it in its original home.

At the same time, this work by an artist who was never fashionable in his own lifetime, and whose very name has since been forgotten, re-emerges as a very

GRANDMA'S HEARTHSTONE *by* **JOHN HABERLE, AMERICAN (1856-1933)**
Gift of C. W. Churchill in memory of his father, 1950

remarkable work of the school of illusionistic still life painting that flourished in the United States in the last years of the nineteenth century. One by one these artists have been rediscovered, Harnett, Peto, now John Haberle. He was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1856 and died there in 1933. He studied at the National Academy of Design in New York and was employed for a time by O. C. Marsh, the famous Yale paleontologist. Perhaps the discipline of doing scientific illustration for this famous scientist, who created one of the world's most famous collections of fossils at Yale, gave Haberle the interest in minute detail that we see here. One instance of his illusionism: he sent to the Chicago Annual

of 1889 a painting listed in the catalogue simply as *U.S.A.* This represented a dollar bill, portions of a ten dollar bill, a one cent stamp and a few lines of praise of *Imitation,* a picture he had exhibited the year before at the National Academy in New York. This picture was attacked at the time as a fraud. One of Chicago's art critics insisted that it was made by pasting actual money on a wood panel and exhibiting it as a painting. A few years since, the present owner of the painting, Mr. Marvin Preson of Detroit, had to get special permission from the Treasury Department to keep the picture, so extraordinary a counterfeit it is.

Grandma's Hearthstone was completed in 1890 after two years of work. It was originally commissioned by James T. Abbe, a wealthy paper manufacturer of Holyoke, Massachusetts, who tore a huge fireplace and its surrounding woodwork out of a farmhouse in Massachusetts and transplanted them whole into the side wall of Haberle's home in New Haven. This was the setting for Haberle's picture of a hearth of the old time, with logs burning and kettles boiling, the mantel shelf covered with pitchers, candlesticks, wine bottles, vases, lamps, a Bible on which rests an unfinished piece of knitting, a string of drying peppers, an apple, and various other objects, not to mention several flies crawling about. Above the mantel are a flintlock musket, sword, string of drying corn, coonskins and various other objects. One of the most perfect pieces of illusionism in the picture is the bellows hanging at the right of the fireplace, with the paint of its original decoration almost worn off by use. Another remarkable detail is the old almanac of 1804 hanging at the left.

Abbe apparently sold the picture to Mr. Churchill who placed it in the front room of his famous establishment. It has a strong local interest for old Detroiters. But more important, it is a masterpiece of a phase of American painting that is only now beginning to receive just recognition. The history of our picture was pieced together by Alfred Frankenstein, who has made a special study of this phase of American painting, in an article in 1948 in *The Magazine of Art.*

E. P. RICHARDSON

Cat. no. 994. Canvas. Height 8 feet; width 5 feet 6½ inches. Signed at upper right: *J. Haberle / New Haven, Ct. / 1890* (the *New Haven, Ct.,* incised in the paint). Acc. no. 50.31. Gift of C. W. Churchill in memory of his father, 1950.

TWO EIGHTEENTH CENTURY COSTUMES

Although France and England were, in matters of fashion, the major arbiters of taste during the eighteenth century, Venice could boast a richly dressed and style-conscious public. At the Detroit Institute of Arts, typical fashions may be seen in two recent acquisitions, a woman's dress made in France during the third quarter of the eighteenth century[1] and a man's waistcoat from Venice dating from the middle of the century.[2]

WOMAN'S DRESS OF SILK TAFFETA
FRENCH, THIRD QUARTER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
William C. Yawkey Fund, 1951

In the woman's costume, both the skirt and overdress are made of the same fancy compound changeable taffeta. The pattern of delicate floral garlands undulating between quadruple bands is produced entirely by the white, pale pink, rose and yellow warps. The wefts are blue; the over-all tone is, therefore, a subdued rosy-violet. The gown is trimmed with narrow bobbin lace of silver tinsel which edges the bodice, the bands across the breast and the bows at the elbows and runs in double scalloped lines down the front edges of the overdress and around the skirt. In the absence of the original stomacher, a modern substitute of lace has been supplied.

While the textile itself is ample evidence for the dating—for many such silks are reproduced in paintings by eighteenth century masters[3] as well as being widely represented in textile collections – the cut of the gown is also typical of the period around 1770, just before the accession of Louis XVI and the period of extravagant fashions introduced by Marie-Antoinette and her modiste, Rose Bertin. The style, referred to as *la robe à plis Watteau,* is a later development of a cut made popular by the painter Antoine Watteau during the later years of the Regency. The lady standing with her back to us in Watteau's *L'Enseigne de Gersaint,* painted in 1720, wears a gown of this type. From the back of her shoulders cascade a series of deep pleats which blend into the skirt just above the hemline. In this early phase of the style, the pleats continue over the shoulders and form two deeply pleated folds down the front of the dress. In our gown, however, the pleats form a separate panel down the back of the dress only. The sleeve in this later version is shorter, coming just to the elbow, and is trimmed with layers of lace which are longer on the underside of the arm than on top. Such a skirt was held out at the waist by two whalebone frames or *paniers,* one extending from each hip.

MAN'S WAISTCOAT OF SILK BROCADE
ITALIAN (VENICE), MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
Gift of Francis W. Robinson, 1949

An intermediate phase of the *robe à plis Watteau* is shown in François Boucher's *Le Déjeuner,* painted in 1744 and now in the Louvre. The fabric is not patterned and the cut of the gown has some of the features of the earlier version, although the pleats do not pass over the shoulders. In this painting, the lady wearing the gown is seated at a table in her salon feeding her child. This suggests that the dress was worn primarily at home and, particularly at the time our gown was made, it was probably not a style for the court. Even during the early years of Marie-Antoinette's reign, around 1776, she had introduced a new style of lavish gowns with enormous *paniers* and wide skirts on which were sewn pearls, ribbons, lace, artificial flowers, tassels and bows.

Thanks to the encouragement of Colbert during the reign of Louis XIV, silk weaving in France during the eighteenth century had spread from Lyon and Tours, which were still major centers, to Orleans, Lille, Alençon, Paris, Toulouse and Fontainebleau. The taffeta in our gown may have come from the looms of any one of these establishments.

The weaving of silk in Venice was still an important industry at the middle of the century when our waistcoat was made. In 1750 there were 12,000 persons employed in the business and, with the 800 looms in operation, they produced about 40,000 lengths of gold cloth and 80,000 of pure silk. The influence of Louis XV textile designs is reflected in most of this production as well as in our waistcoat, although Venice was more resistant to French influence than Florence, Turin or Genoa. A popular mid-eighteenth century French motif, that of undulating ribbons interspersed with floral bouquets, was reinterpreted in Venice for the decoration of the borders of the waistcoat. The light blue silk ground is of plain fancy cloth weave and decorated with stylized silver flowers as well as with the flowers, ribbons and scrolls brocaded in polychrome silk and gold and silver threads along the border. The back of the waistcoat is of a light blue silk which may be a later addition. Unlike some other examples, there are no lacings at the back.

As in the case of the French dress, the cut of the costume helps us to date it. At the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of the eighteenth, men's waistcoats descended to the knees and were buttoned most of the way down. Coats were fitted at the waist and flared out below. About 1750, a major change began to take place. Coats were made narrower and the skirts began to open and slope toward the back. Waistcoats became shorter and featured points which flared out over the upper part of the thighs. This tendency increased as time went on and resulted in the development of the modern vest. The usual explanation for this change is that gentlemen found the long waistcoat confining. The new style was satirized by writers of the time. In a poem entitled *Female Advice to a Painter,* published in the *London Magazine* in 1755, we find these pertinent verses:

> "Be his frock quite alamode;
> Short, lest his steps it incommode;"

Our waistcoat is long, but it opens just below the waist and the skirts slope slightly toward the back. It represents a very late phase of the earlier waistcoat style, just on the brink of the change around 1750.

Venetian painters, particularly Pietro Longhi, have left us many representations of similar waistcoats.[4] Elaborate brocaded examples like ours were frowned upon by the government which had many times proscribed ostentatious dress. If, by day, a Venetian gentleman bothered to cover his lavish costume with the traditional dark robe, at night he wore it openly to the theatre, casino or concert, thereby defying a law which perhaps he himself had created as a member of the Senate or Council.[5] Our waistcoat is of excellent quality even to the tinsel-covered buttons, but it would be foolhardy to assert that it was owned by a noble. As Roberti, a contemporary observer in Venice, remarked, "One can hardly distinguish, from the clothes he wears, the merchant from the patrician, the courtier from the commoner."

A. S. CAVALLO

[1] Acc. no. 51.84. Width of the silk, 19 inches; length of the underskirt, 39 inches; length of back, 66 inches. William C. Yawkey Fund, 1951.

[2] Acc. no. 49.519. Length of front of neck to hem, 39 inches; width of front at hem, 20½ inches. Gift of Francis W. Robinson, 1949, in honor of Mrs. Adèle Coulin Weibel, Curator Emeritus of Textiles and Islamic Art.

[3] In a picture by Nicolas Lavreince, entitled *Qu'en dit l'abbé?* painted about 1785, a merchant shows a lady a length of silk quite similar to that used in our dress. It has, however, the more sober feeling of a later design.

[4] *La Lezione di Musica,* Venice, Galleria Salom, and *La Lezione di Geografia,* Venice, Galleria Querini-Stampilia. Both are from a series painted by Longhi about 1748.

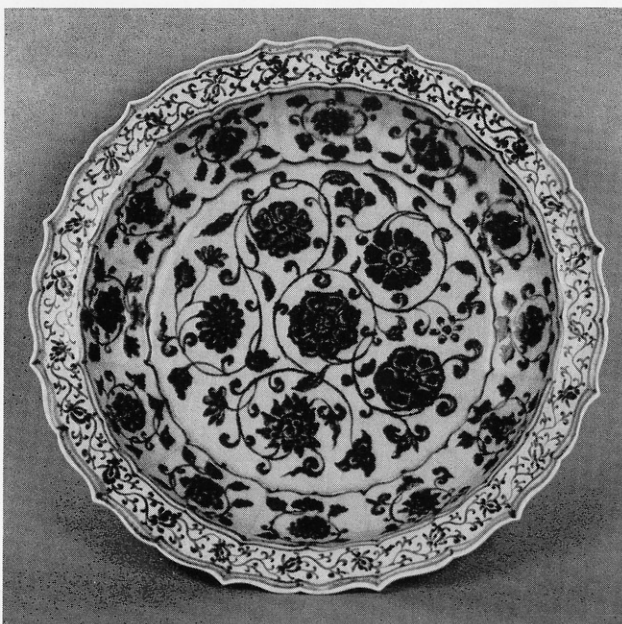
[5] For a thorough account of costume, accessories and fashion in Venice at this time, see G. Morazzoni, *La Moda a Venezia nel Secolo XVIII,* Gli Amici del Museo Teatrale alla Scala, Milan, 1931.

THREE EXAMPLES OF EARLY CHINESE CERAMICS

In the past few years the Institute has been able to purchase a number of examples of Chinese ceramics which, excellent and beautiful in themselves, fill gaps in our collections. Most of them belong to the early periods which many collectors prefer to the more ornate, more immediately pleasing examples of the later dynasties. Reproduced in the following pages are three of these works, to which anonymous Chinese potters gave a spark of their genius.

The earliest piece is a dark brown and black vase, the narrow neck of which could hold no more than a flowering branch of plum blossom — hence its name: *mei-p'ing,* or "Prunus vase."[1] As subtle as its shape, so graceful in its simplicity, is its decoration of incised lotus petals framing large peonies. It is said to have been found at Hsien-Ho-Hsien, in Honan. In shape and decoration it belongs to the period of the Sung emperors. A large bowl of Tz'u Chou ware of slightly later date (late Sung or early Yüan), graciously presented to the Institute by Mrs.

BOWL, CHINESE, LATE SUNG OR YÜAN DYNASTY (1260-1368)
Gift of Mrs. Edsel B. Ford, 1950



PLATE, CHINESE, FIFTEENTH CENTURY
Sarah Beacon Hill Fund, 1947

VASE, CHINESE, SUNG DYNASTY (960-1279)
Gift of the Founders Society
General Membership Fund, 1950

Edsel B. Ford, has become one of the most popular ceramics in our galleries.[2] It is of buff stoneware with a wash of white slip and cream glaze, stopping short of the base. Better preserved than in most examples of the type, its decoration in red, yellow and green enamels — a duck peacefully swimming in a lotus pond — gives it its charm.

The third example reproduced here is a so-called "palace dish" of rather large size.[3] Decorated in underglaze blue, a type of painting probably known to the Sung potters, but apparently rarely used in China before the Ming dynasty, it is attributed to what may be called the classical period of "blue-and-white," the reign of Yung-lo (1403-1424) or that of Hsüan-tê (1426-1435). Both these reigns were short, but they are traditionally noted for the great beauty of their ceramics, in particular for white porcelain decorated, as our plate is, with floral designs in pure cobalt oxyde. It is beautifully potted, with curving sides and a wide out-spread lip; the walls and rim are moulded in a foliate design such as one finds in certain types of Persian plates. Even closer in spirit to the Near East is the decoration: such stylized flowers (peonies, chrysanthemums, or the Indo-Buddhist lotus?) are found in many examples of Persian ceramics, for instance in a famous Kubashi dish in the British Museum. However, with its soft glaze which makes such a perfect background for the broad silvery-blue design, the almost calligraphic quality of the treatment of details such as leaves and branches, above all on account of the sensitive handling of the drawing, the Detroit dish is quite unmistakably Chinese, and a valuable addition to early blue-and-white specimens in American collections.

P. L. G.

[1] Acc. no. 50.192. Height 15¾ inches. Gift of the Founders Society General Membership Fund, 1950.

[2] Acc. no. 50.195. Height 4⅞ inches; diam. 9¼ inches. Gift of Mrs. Edsel B. Ford, 1950.

[3] Acc. no. 47.370. Height 2¼ inches; diameter 13⅜ inches. The unglazed bottom shows a smooth white body; the piece is unmarked. The exterior wall is decorated with stylized floral groups. Gift of the Sarah Bacon Hill Fund, 1947. The problem and dating of early Chinese blue-and-white porcelain has been studied by Gerald Reitlinger and Martin Bulton in the *Burlington Magazine*, "Early Ming Blue-and-white," January and March, 1948. The Kubashi dish mentioned above is reproduced in the January issue, along with a "palace dish" somewhat similar to the Detroit example.

FOUR LITHOGRAPHS *by* TAMAYO

In his first venture into lithography, Rufino Tamayo produced seven different examples; four of these have recently been added to the Print Collection: *Watermelon* (1949), *Man with Hands Crossed* (1948), *Two Women* (1949), and *Coyote* (1949).

Tamayo's prints do not differ sharply from his paintings; they are the oils translated into the language of color lithography. But they are good translations, made with understanding and respect for the idiom of the new language. Tamayo escaped the problem which confronts many modern painters when they turn to the graphic media — the sacrifice of surface texture — since he has never been interested in tactile effects. His paintings are distinguished by a beautiful depth and body of color; his lithographs, through the subtle manipulation of crayon and opaque tusche, present remarkably rich and substantial surfaces.

In Tamayo's work, it has been said, "traditional Indian and modern Parisian styles co-exist in peace."[2] His training combines drawing in the Museum of Archaeology in Mexico City with the study of modern French painting.[3] Even in his most recent work these two sources of inspiration may be distinguished. He has absorbed the dissection, distortion, and extraordinary perspectives of the modern idiom, but he presents them molded by the inspiration of Pre-Columbian sculpture. The distorted head in *Man with Hands Crossed* is as surely derived from Aztec sources as from Picasso. Present day Mexico also makes itself felt; Tamayo's color is an enriched version of the Mexican folk-art palette—blue, pink, yellow, white, earth-red, black. Some bit of local detail often appears even in his most abstract works; notice, for example, the white peon costume in *Man with Hands Crossed.*

In contrast to the earlier generation of Mexican muralists, led by Rivera and Orozco, Tamayo has always preferred personal statement to monumental proclamation. Until 1940 his work was chiefly descriptive, occasionally dramatic; his paintings portrayed with quiet sympathy the people and the still lifes of his boyhood home, the market place. *Watermelon* preserves a connection with this early period. Here Tamayo indulges, perhaps over-indulges, an enormous appetite for the luscious color of the exotic fruit. Acid pink dominates the entire picture. In another work Tamayo has been credited with giving to the watermelon "an almost heroic interpretation"; coloristically speaking, this lithograph is its apotheosis!

During the past decade, Tamayo has exchanged quiet genre for elemental drama. The phenomena of the sky — the stars, the moon, the eclipse of the sun, vast space itself — have become a recurring theme. Man appears victimized by subservience to a non-reasonable nature. *Man with Hands Crossed,* undoubtedly a symbolic self-portrait, is an emblem of immobility. Unseen forces, simultaneously pulling the figure in opposite directions, result in the frustration of movement, proclaimed by huge clasped hands. In *Coyote,* the howling dog is transfixed, even transformed, by his instinctual homage to the moon. The figures in

MAN WITH CROSSED HANDS *by* RUFINO TAMAYO, MEXICAN CONTEMPORARY
Elizabeth P. Kirby Fund, 1951

Two Women do not move freely, at their own will, but as if controlled by cosmic circumstance.

VIRGINIA HARRIMAN

[1] *Watermelon.* Height 17 inches; width 21 inches. Acc. no. 51.74. *Man with Hands Crossed.* Height 20¾ inches; width 17 inches. Acc. no. 51.75. *Two Women.* Height 21 inches; width 17 inches. Acc. no. 51.76. *Coyote.* Height 16½ inches; width 21 inches. Acc. no. 51.77. Gift of the Founders Society, Elizabeth P. Kirby Fund, 1951.

[2] Jean Charlot, as quoted by Robert Goldwater, *Rufino Tamayo,* New York, 1947, p. 23.

[3] *Op. cit.*

EARLY AMERICAN PEWTER

The steadily growing collection of American decorative arts has been enriched by three fine pieces of pewter, a sugar bowl and two porringers. Early pewter, prized today for its subdued luster and fine proportion, was an indispens-

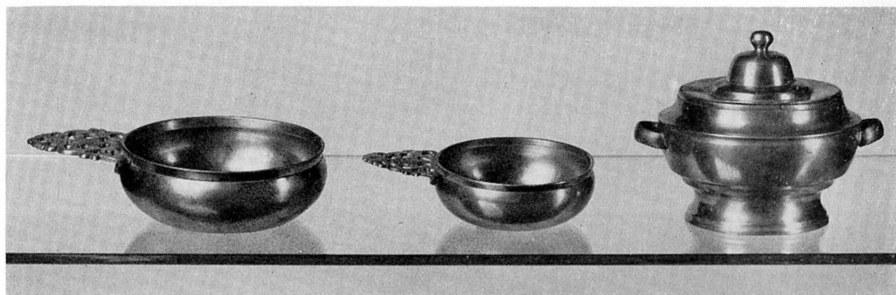
able metal in the homes of our forefathers. The variety of shapes into which it was cast was unbelievably wide, ranging from the table ware and shoe buckles of the village dignitaries, to the cups in which they took communion in church, the shaving mugs of their barbers and the nursing bottles used by their progeny.

Not long after the settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, trained pewterers migrated here from England, bringing their tools and molds with them. Pewter makers in the American colonies, while not under such surveillance as the English "Worshipful Company of Pewterers," did have their own guild and followed English traditions of the craft in general. All three pieces are marked, even though marking in America was not obligatory.

All three were made in Rhode Island. Like Boston, the Connecticut Valley, New York and Pennsylvania, Providence was a great regional center for the making of pewter. These centers were not arbitrary geographical divisions, but produced ware with definite local variations in style and design.[1] Rhode Island pewterers, best known for their porringers, developed a distinct type of handle, openwork as in England, rather than the solid one favored by the Continent. Our two porringers have single openwork handles, bowl forms with a short vertical lip and convex sides. Their lines are clear cut and satisfying.

The earlier porringer[2] is the larger. Its maker, Samuel Hamlin, worked in Providence in the early 1820's. He was an all-around pewterer of the older order, making whatever the market of the day demanded; porringers and basins seem to have been his specialties. Our porringer bears Hamlin's name above the American eagle, even though marks by Americans on porringers and basins are not common.

The name of William Calder, like that of Samuel Hamlin, appears in a Providence directory of 1824; Calder's work, however, continued through the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Our porringer,[3] marked "Calder" above the eagle in the thumb-piece, is slightly smaller than the Hamlin one, but like it in clear definition of line and form.



EARLY AMERICAN PEWTER. *Left to right:* PORRINGER by Samuel Hamlin, American (Providence, R. I.), early Nineteenth Century; *Gibbs-Williams Fund,* 1951. PORRINGER by William Calder, American (Providence, R. I.), second quarter Nineteenth Century; *Gibbs-Williams Fund,* 1951. SUGAR BOWL by George Richardson, American, second quarter Nineteenth Century. *Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1950*

George Richardson, maker of our sugar bowl,[4] is a craftsman whose career still calls for more research. West tells us that "Both Calder and Kerfoot say that George Richardson's work was done about 1825, and that his ware marked Boston was made not later than 1828. Ware with the mark of the Glennore Company, however, was made later, just how much later cannot now be told."[5] Richardson is known to have moved down to Cranston, Rhode Island. Our covered sugar bowl bears the mark of the Glennore Company and eagle on its base, along with Richardson's name and Cranston. Surviving sugar bowls are unusual in American pewter; ours is sensitively designed, with two handles, circular molded base and finial on its cover. Because of the great beauty of this bowl, its rarity and extreme lateness, Kerfoot[6] selected it (or its counterpart) as the frontispiece of his book. This distinguished piece is the gift of Mr. Robert Tannahill.

ELIZABETH H. PAYNE

[1] *American Pewter* by John Meredith Graham II, The Brooklyn Museum, 1949, p. 8.

[2] Height 1³/₁₆ inches; diameter 5⅜ inches. Acc. no. 51.51. Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951.

[3] Height 1⁷/₁₆ inches; diameter 4¼ inches. Acc. no. 51.50. Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1951.

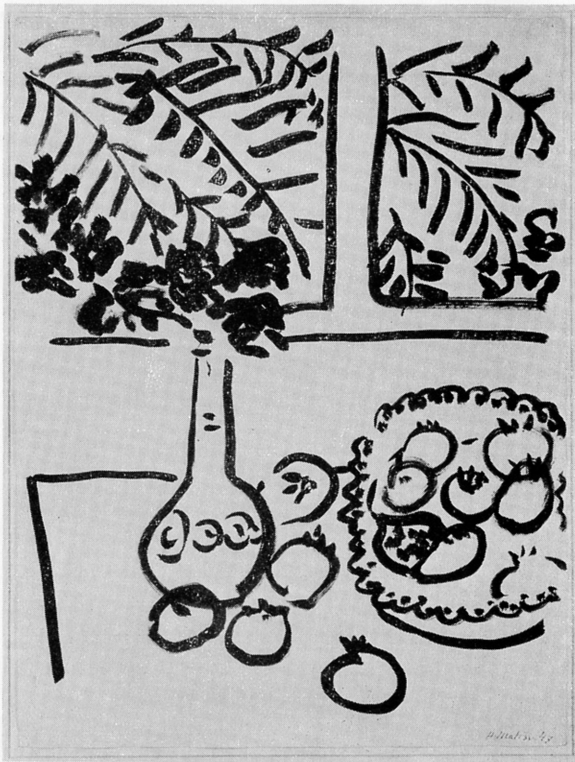
[4] Height 5 inches; diameter 5½ inches. Acc. no. 50.90. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1950.

[5] "George Richardson, Pewterer" by Edward H. West in *Antiques,* vol. 38, October 1940, p. 177.

[6] *American Pewter* by J. B. Kerfoot, Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1924, frontispiece.

A MATISSE DRAWING

A drawing of large format and exceptional beauty, executed with brush in broad strokes of fluid black Chinese ink upon white paper,[1] by Henri Matisse, the dean of contemporary French painters, was presented to the Museum last Spring by one of its most generous benefactors, Mr. Robert H. Tannahill, whose distinguished and catholic taste is reflected once again in this recent gift, which was especially selected by him for the permanent collection of graphic arts. A resplendent example of the master's latest style, this powerful and decorative drawing, dated in 1947 and entitled *Still-Life with Fruit and Flowers,* belongs to a long series of similar works of impressive size and forceful impact with which the artist has been preoccupied during the past four or five years. Now at the age of eighty-two, Matisse continues to astonish his audience by revealing anew the many-sided versatility of his genius, not only in drawings such as these but in a wide variety of other techniques ranging from paintings, sculpture, prints, tapestry designs, stained glass, illustrated books, the architecture and decoration of a chapel in the small town of Vence in the south of France, through experimentation with stencils and cut-out colored papers, or *découpage.* An inexhaustible



STILL-LIFE WITH FRUIT AND FLOWERS *by* **HENRI MATISSE, FRENCH CONTEMPORARY**
Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1951

vigor seems to mark all of Matisse's late productions which today are as rich, intense, and youthful in mood as at any period during his lengthy career. He requires in his new drawings and paintings only the simplest subjects—the female figure, fruit and flowers—to convey that sense of joy which has always emanated from his best work and which gracefully communicates the special flavor of the French spirit in its most tasteful aspects.

The present drawing depicts with great economy of means a vase of flowers and a bowl overflowing with fruit on a table, barely indicated, which is set against a double window opening upon the foliage of delicate Riviera palm trees. The character of the overall pattern of the drawing is a reminder of Matisse's constant fascination for the decorative arts of the Near East which have exerted such a distinct influence upon his style and which he has studied with intense interest and collected with passion from his earliest years. What here appears at first to be a type of draughtsmanship almost child-like in its simplicity and easy of imitation is actually the highly accomplished, facile expression of an artist of extraordinary genius and sophistication whose art, as we know it, is thoroughly

well-seasoned and grounded in the basic traditions of the soundest kind of draughtsmanship evolving out of Ingres. In this brush and ink drawing, and the others of the series, all the colors and qualities of a painting or mural are suggested with utmost subtlety: the blank white spaces of the paper gain their intensity from the sharply contrasting blacks, while the thick black strokes of the Chinese ink itself, applied with brush, combine to heighten the luminosity of the whites and thus seem miraculously to evoke in the mind's eye realistic colors of great brilliance. Matisse himself has remarked that his recent drawings contain the same elements as a painting, that is to say, in the differentiation which exists between the surfaces in a unity of light. Drawings, he feels, are the generators of light, and thereby staking his claim, he has proved, in the interior of his chapel at Vence, to be an innovator once more to the extent of juxtaposing on the one hand the reflections of color thrown by strong light through stained glass against a white wall with pure large-scale black and white drawings projected upon another. Furthermore, Matisse firmly believes in the necessity for the fundamental study of drawing as an essential adjunct in cultivating the spirit and in leading color into spiritual paths insofar as drawing may, in his opinion, be said to belong properly to the realm of the spirit and painting to the realm of the senses.

With the acquisition of this still-life drawing, which shows the artist at his finest, Matisse is at present represented by six works in the Museum collection: the large important painting entitled *The Window,* of 1916, from the Kelekian collection; *The Rumanian Blouse,* a line drawing in ink of 1937; the *Odalisque,* an etching of 1946, and *l'Antillaise,* a lithograph of 1947; and finally, the twenty plates of *Jazz,* Matisse's monumental work of 1948 which is executed in a peculiarly successful colored stencil technique, based on *découpage,* and despite the ripeness of his advancing years, again witness to the artist's ever-inventive resourcefulness which proclaims itself afresh wherever he ventures.

JOHN S. NEWBERRY, JR.

[1] Black Chinese ink and brush drawing on white paper; H. 30 inches; W. 22 inches. Signed and dated at the lower right: H. Matisse, 47. Acc. no. 51.64. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill.

ROCOCO IN THE INSTITUTE

French art as represented in the Institute owes much to Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, whose generosity in past years made possible the acquisition of such important or delightful French works as Nattier's *Madame Henriette,* one of the best liked pictures in our museum, Aubry's *Shepherdess of the Alps,* or Caffieri's marble bust of Franklin. It is with gratitude that we may announce a new proof of the interest which these faithful friends of the Institute bear to things French — the gift of several splendid *objets d'art* which bring to our eighteenth century French Room the finishing touches of color and gaiety which it needed. To the majestic flat top desk which belonged to Stanislas Lecszinski, to

CANAPÉ COVERED IN BEAUVAIS TAPESTRY
FRENCH, MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1950

the Savonnerie rug and the Pigalle marble statuettes presented by Mr. Tannahill and Mr. and Mrs. Kanzler have now been added a splendid *ameublement* covered in Beauvais tapestry and a Régence *bergère,* as well as ormulu candlesticks and andirons without which the room would be incomplete.[1]

Imagination, virtuosity tempered by good sense, fantasy tempered by infallible taste, were the qualities common to the craftsmen who fashioned these objects. Executed in the first half of the eighteenth century, when Paris was the artistic center of the world, they reflect an age which was gracious, civilized and sensuous, and help to make the aristocratic living room recreated in Detroit what such living rooms always were, *"un séjour délicieux et enchanté."* Period rooms in museums do not always succeed in recreating the atmosphere, the flavor of a period; some give an impression of artificiality in which only wax figures are missing, others are merely insipid; others still, the worse ones – are "cute." Our French salon, the only European period room of which the Institute can boast, is a resurrection.

P. L. G.

[1] *Canapé,* gilded and carved, covered in Beauvais tapestry, French, Louis XV period (acc. no. 50.78). Two armchairs, *en suite* with preceding; covered in Beauvais tapestry with animal subjects, Louis XV period (acc. nos. 50.79 and 50.80). *Bergère,* walnut, covered with crimson silk with white floral design, French, first quarter of the 18th century (acc. no. 50.89). Andirons, a pair, gilded bronze, with male and female Chinese figures, each seated upon a volute from which springs a curved branch of foliage; French, middle 18th century (acc. 50.81 *a* and *b*). Candelabra, a pair; gilded bronze, twisted body ending in three endive leaf arms supporting vine leaf *bobêches* (acc. no. 50.82 *a* and *b*). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1950.