

# Bulletin

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OF THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS

THE VIRGIN ANNUNCIATE  
by FRANCESCO DI VALDAMBRINO  
Italian, early 15th century

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford II, 1957



**A VIRGIN ANNUNCIATE**  
by **FRANCESCO DI VALDAMBRINO**

Not every discovery of modern times has to do with atoms or comes from a science laboratory; some are made in the arts. In 1930 an Italian scholar, Peleo Bacci, discovered in a cupboard of the Opera del Duomo in Siena three polychromed wooden busts. He recognized these as what remained from a commission mentioned in the cathedral archives of 1408. The records of the Opera, or Board of Works, contain an order given in that year by the head of the board, Caterino di Corsino, for four seated statuettes of the Patron Saints of Siena, Ansano, Savino, Vittore and Crescenzo. The name of the sculptor receiving the commission was Francesco di Domenico di Valdambriano. The archives also recorded the delivery of the completed figures (gilded by Giusa di Frosino and colored by Andrea di Bartolo<sup>1</sup> and Benedetto di Bindo) on September 26, 1409. Of the four only the three busts of Saints Savino, Vittore and Crescenzo have survived. Bacci's research, inspired by this find, produced in 1936 the first monograph ever written on a Siennese sculptor of exceptional interest who, in spite of having been a friend of Jacopo della Quercia and Ghiberti, and being mentioned by Vasari, had been for some strange reason totally forgotten. A number of works by Francesco di Valdambriano are now recognized. He is again regarded as a major figure in fifteenth century Siennese art in the period of Sassetta and Giovanni di Paolo, and his art forms a parallel to that of these painters in its beauty of style and tenderness of feeling.

Francesco di Valdambriano took part, with Ghiberti, Brunelleschi and Jacopo della Quercia, in the famous competition of 1401-02 for the bronze doors of the Baptistry in Florence, which Ghiberti won. In 1406-07 he was in Lucca, working with Jacopo della Quercia on the celebrated monuments of Ilaria del Carretto; the garland-bearing cupids on one side of the tomb are his. He later assisted Jacopo della Quercia on the *Fonte Gaia* in Siena, doing the statue commonly known as *Acca Larenzia*. Yet in spite of working for many years with one of the most powerful artistic personalities of his day on these stone monuments, Francesco di Valdambriano retained his artistic independence. Wood, not stone, was his chosen medium; and unlike the massive and heroic style of his friend, his fresh and personal art was marked by elegance of form and a tender, lyrical feeling.

A *Virgin* from an *Annunciation* group by Francesco di Valdambriano, the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford II, is the first example of his work in America.<sup>2</sup> It is an admirable example of his delicacy of sentiment and noble severity of style, and its beautiful old polychromy lends great charm to the piece.

According to the chronology of the artist's work suggested by Enzo Carli in *La scultura lignea senese* (1951) the Detroit *Virgin* would have been executed in the 1420's, at about the same period as the *Annunciation Group* from the church of S. Francesco in Pienza (acquired in the 1950's by the Rijksmuseum. At this period Francesco di Valdambriano represents a phase of Siennese art



which we are familiar with in the paintings of his contemporary, Sassetta. Siense art was then still conservative enough to retain the linear grace of Gothic art but was at the same time inspired by a fresh sense of nature. The two impulses were for a moment in delicate balance: easy grace was united to dignity, naturalness to convention, tender humanity in sentiment to an austere nobility of form.

This *Virgin Annunciate* by Francesco di Valdambrino is an example of the grandeur of style which, in the great periods of Italian art, lifts the expression of simple human feelings to the level of the timeless. We are fortunate to be able to add a great rarity, and a great work of art, to the sequence of Italian sculpture in our museum.

E. P. RICHARDSON

<sup>1</sup> Andrea di Bartolo is represented in our museum by two paintings, a *Virgin and Child* and a *Christ Blessing*.

<sup>2</sup> Acc. no. 57.96. Height, 61½ inches, including the wooden base. Collections: Salvadori, Florence; Adolph Loewi, Los Angeles. A triangular section of the lower part of the dress, in front, for about 15 inches from the base, is restored.



THE VIRGIN ANNUNCIATE  
by FRANCESCO DI VALDAMBRINO  
Italian, early 15th century

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford II, 1957



BERENICE  
by ROSALBA CARRIERA  
Italian, 1675-1757

Gift of Mrs. William D.  
Vogel, in memory of  
Mrs. Ralph Harman  
Booth, 1956



### A VENETIAN PORTRAIT IN PASTEL

At the time of the Institute's splendid *Venice in the 18th Century*, two fresh and luminous pastels lent to the exhibition gave Detroiters an opportunity to see the work of the gifted woman artist, Rosalba Carriera. Born in Venice and active chiefly there, Rosalba was a cosmopolitan figure during her lifetime (1675-1757), visiting Paris and Vienna as well as most of the courts of Italy. It was due in great part to her that the formal, impressive baroque portrait in oil was replaced by the more intimate and casual one in pastel.

Rosalba's portrait of Caterina Sagredo Barbarigo as *Berenice*,<sup>1</sup> holding a pair of scissors to her dark lock of hair, reveals the type of light, ideal theme which was so popular during the eighteenth century. Berenice, wife of King Ptolemy Evergetes, had dedicated her hair in the temple for the safe return of her husband from Syria. The astronomer Conon of Samos reported that it had been changed into the constellation called Coma Berenices.

Mrs. William D. Vogel, the former owner of this delightful portrait, has generously given it to the Institute in memory of her mother, Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth. Fluent in touch, the pastel has both freshness and elegance.



Berenice's delicate flesh tones have some of the warm translucence of the pearls at her ears. Here we have the embodiment of feminine grace and charm, which flowered so profusely in eighteenth century Venice.

E. H. P.

Cat. No. 1225. Pastel on paper. Height 17½ inches; width 12½ inches. Collections: Arturo Grassi, New York; Ralph H. Booth, Detroit. (Note: An oil painting of the same subject by the same artist is in the collection of Dr. William E. Suida.) Gift of Mrs. William D. Vogel, in memory of her mother, Mrs. Ralph Harman Booth, 1956.

### **A SILK FABRIC OF BIZARRE DESIGN**

Mrs. Edsel B. Ford has added to her long list of gifts to the textile department a magnificent wallhanging made of a brocaded silk which belongs to a small group of fabrics that today are treasured by museums and private collectors in Europe and America.

This hanging consists of silk damask; the brilliant wine red of the satin ground sets off the design in which the damascened silk patterns are enhanced, augmented and completed by silver-gilt and white silver brocading; a few details are woven in a light blue silk thread. The design is a fantastic composition of enigmatic elements interspersed with a few fairly naturalistic flowers, all held together by a masterly use of curves and interlacings. The pattern repeat is thirty-five inches.

#### **SILK DAMASK**

*East Indian for the English trade, late 17th century*  
Gift of Mrs. Edsel B. Ford, 1957





These silks appeared first towards the end of the seventeenth century. Their outstanding characteristic is a complete negation of the chief tenets of design of the Renaissance and Baroque. Where were they created? The textile historians are noncommittal, for neither France, Italy, Spain, nor the Near East, had anything to offer that pointed the way of these fantasies. Then there appeared, four years ago, a study of the subject by the Danish scholar of the decorative arts, Vilhelm Slomann. He traces the Bizarre Silks to their source and proves with exceedingly careful research that they were commissioned by one of the richest trade companies, the East India Company of London, from its station in Bengal, where silk weaving had a long tradition:

“Silks, new, gaudy, unusual.”

Thus the Company's directors wrote, urgently, to their representatives in India. The Company had become Europe's greatest importer of Oriental textiles, their imports catered to the “Indian craze” that had seized the world of fashion. In 1701 the Spitalfields weavers forced the enactment of a protective law which forbade “the use of all silks, bengalls, stuff mixed with silk,” imported from India. This brought an end to a truly fantastic episode in the history of textile art.

ADELE C. WEIBEL

<sup>1</sup> Accession number 57.98. Height 100 inches, width 81 inches. Four widths of the fabric are sewn together; a gold galloon and a light blue lining complete the hanging. Gift of Mrs. Edsel B. Ford, 1957.

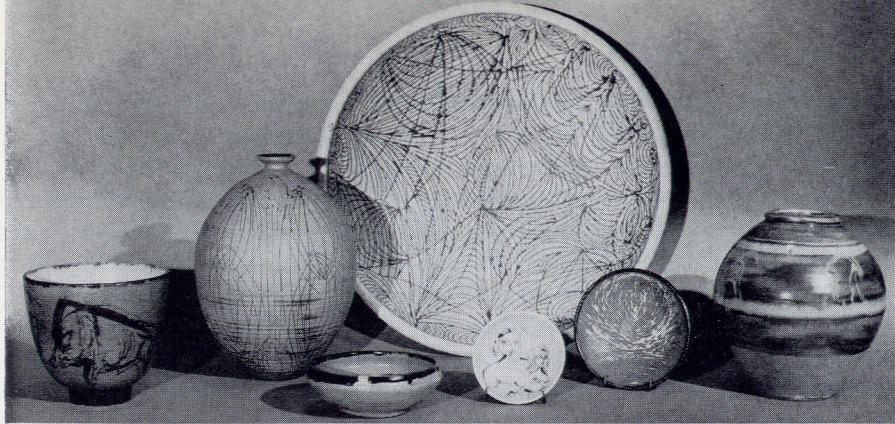
<sup>2</sup> Vilhelm Slomann, *Bizarre Designs in Silks, Trade and Tradition*, published by the Ny Carlsberg Foundation, Copenhagen, Ejnaar Munksgaard, 1953.

## A NEW GROUP OF CERAMICS

Mrs. Richard H. Webber has recently presented to the Institute a group of seven ceramic pieces which were formerly in the private collection of Mr. George Tolbert. Included in the group is a large stoneware jar by Bernard Leach,<sup>1</sup> the noted contemporary English ceramist, which is an excellent example of the artist's work, demonstrating his command of the clay medium and his tastefully simple use of glaze. Also in the group is a shallow stoneware bowl by the Japanese, Hamada,<sup>2</sup> who is considered by most potters and scholars today as the finest living potter. Neither of these artists has been hitherto represented in the Museum's collection. A small porcelain bowl<sup>3</sup> by Richard Diebboll is glazed with a soft white with a stained crackle and is decorated on the interior with a very delicate brush drawing in a copper green underglaze stain.

The four remaining pieces are all by contemporary potters now working in Ann Arbor, Michigan. A large stoneware jar by Richard M. Lincoln<sup>4</sup> is representative of this young artist's style and indicates the high quality of work produced in the Potters Guild at Ann Arbor, a small group of serious ceramists of which Mr. Lincoln is president. A teacher at the Potters Guild, Mrs. Rhoda





Foreground: (Left to Right) BOWL, Rhoda and Carlos Lopez; JAR, Richard M. Lincoln; BOWL, Hamada; BOWL, Richard Diebboll; BOWL, J. T. Abernathy; JAR, Bernard Leach.  
Background: LARGE BOWL, J. T. Abernathy.

*Gift of Mrs. Richard H. Webber, 1957*

Lopez is represented in the new acquisitions by a beautifully thrown bowl which was decorated by her late husband, Carlos Lopez, with line drawings in a blue-black clay slip of running boars.<sup>5</sup> The two hands here employed show a very happy fusion of results and the pot reveals a complete respect for both artists' efforts.

Most striking among the group are two bowls by the internationally known Ann Arbor potter, J. T. Abernathy. One very large bowl is characteristic of the best of this man's work.<sup>6</sup> It is large, but not ungainly, and very gracefully shaped. It has the solidity and weight of stoneware, but not the brutal harshness and crudity of many other artists' works in this material. The glaze is a white, soft cornwall stone which on the interior has been sgraffitoed through to reveal a dark clay slip underneath in a fine, linear pattern, much like interlacing spider webs in effect. The exterior surface is pleasantly rough, communicating an effect of texture and strength of expression. Most of the ceramics by this artist that have characterized his work have been large and powerful, but the small porcelain bowl by him, also acquired in the group, marks another side of his talent.<sup>7</sup> This is a very elegant and subtly tasteful bowl which is decorated in the interior with white lines inlaid into a blue-green glaze, and on the exterior with a soft white glaze which bonds beautifully with the porcelain. The shiny black rim frames the inner surface. These Abernathy bowls are the first to be acquired by the Museum, and with those by Hamada and Leach help to round out our collection of contemporary ceramics with the work of three internationally known potters.

CHARLES MEYER

<sup>1</sup> Acc. No. 57.122. Height 11½ inches; diameter 11 inches.

<sup>2</sup> Acc. No. 57.118. Height 3 inches; diameter 8½ inches.

<sup>3</sup> Acc. No. 57.117. Height 2½ inches; diameter 5½ inches.

<sup>4</sup> Acc. No. 57.121. Height 14½ inches; diameter 10 inches.

<sup>5</sup> Acc. No. 57.123. Height 7¾ inches; diameter 8½ inches.

<sup>6</sup> Acc. No. 57.120. Height 4½ inches; diameter 24½ inches.

<sup>7</sup> Acc. No. 57.119. Height 1¾ inches; diameter 7¾ inches.



**FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN  
MEMORIAL COLLECTION**

Outstanding among recent donations to the Archives of American Art is the gift of Howard W. Lipman, in memory of Frederic Fairchild Sherman, for many years a prominent figure in the field of American art and publishing. Mr. Sherman was perhaps best known in connection with *Art in America* which Dr. W. R. Valentiner and he founded in 1913 and which he carried on until his death in 1940. At the same time he was active as a collector and art dealer and as publisher of fine editions and catalogues of such important collections as those of J. P. Morgan and Henry Huntington. His own writings on American painting, in the appreciation of which he was a pioneer, are well known to students in the field and include *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, *American Painters of Yesterday*



The pastel portrait of Catherine Saunders, one of a pair by James Sharples, forms part of a group of fourteen American paintings from the Frederic Fairchild Sherman collection, given to the Institute by Howard W. Lipman, 1957.



*and Today, Early Connecticut Artists and Craftsmen and Sonnets Suggested by Sculptures.*

Mrs. Sherman's gifts to the Archives reflect these varied activities. Among the hundreds of documents which she presented are letters from dealers, publishers, scholars and collectors, both here and abroad. Laurence Binyon, Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., Roland Knoedler, J. P. Morgan, Ernest Thomas Seton, Campbell Dodgson and Dr. W. R. Valentiner are just a few of the personalities to be found in the correspondence. The subject of the letters varies from short notes of appreciation and comment to extensive and scholarly exchanges with authorities on pertinent material in all parts of the world. The greater part of the files, however, is made up of working papers for books and articles, a number of them unpublished, on American artists of all periods. In addition to their intrinsic worth, the Sherman gifts are of value in revealing the sort of material on which the Archives of American Art are being built.

MIRIAM L. LESLEY

### **THE VALUE OF THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS EXTENSION SERVICES PROGRAM TO THE COMMUNITY**

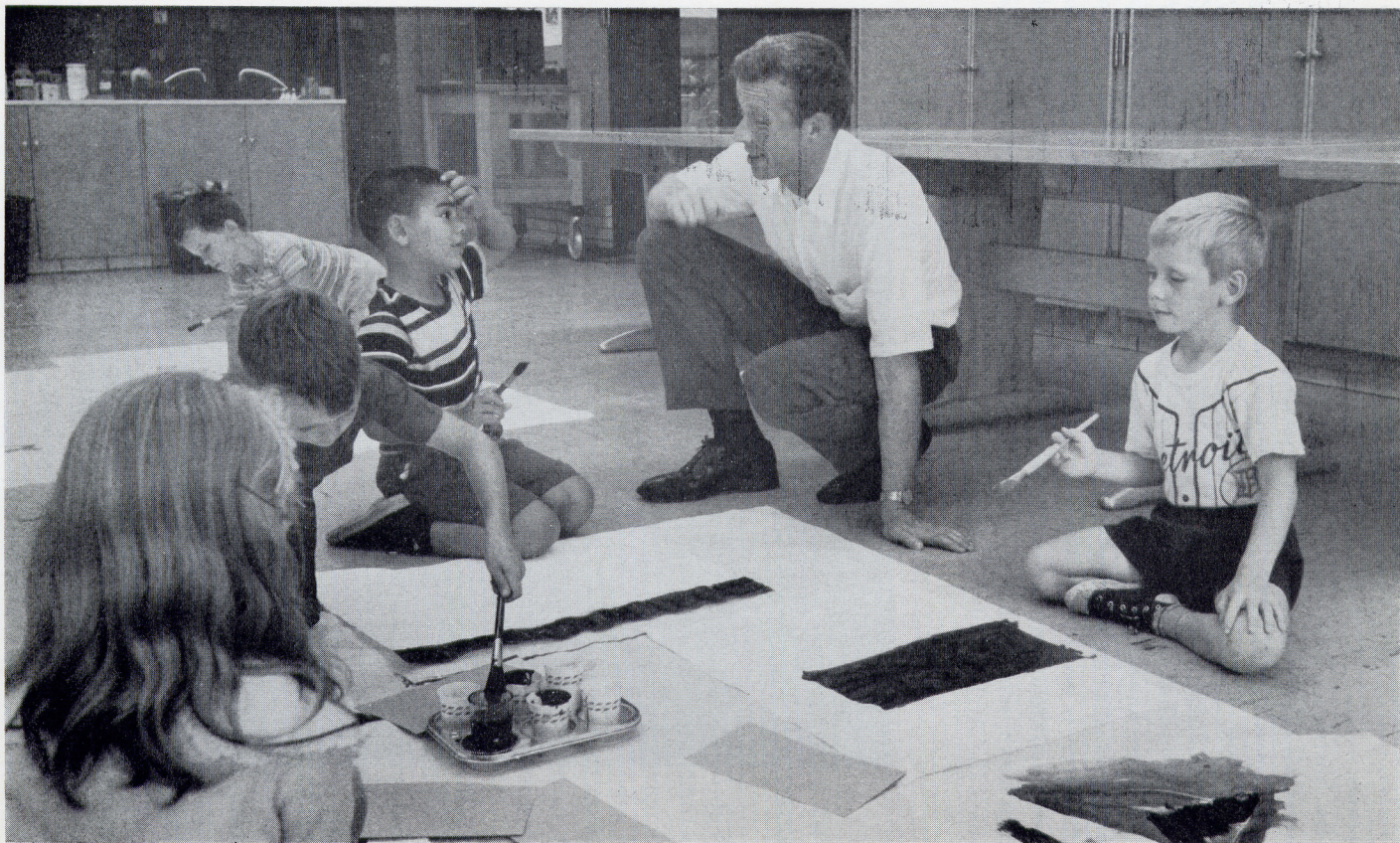
With the rapid growth of metropolitan Detroit within the last few years, it has become increasingly difficult for young people and adults to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the Detroit Institute of Arts. Expressways have aided suburbanites to some degree, but the problem of commuting remains a real obstacle for many.

A survey conducted about two years ago revealed that one third of the participants in various museum activities were from outside the city limits of Detroit. With such a high percentage living in suburban areas, it was felt that there were many more art enthusiasts who would welcome the availability of Art Institute educational activities in their own communities. With this idea in mind, plans were made for such a suburban program.

Mr. Alvan Macauley, President of the Museum's Founders Society, enlisted the help of three Detroit firms who are interested in serving metropolitan Detroit: the J. L. Hudson Company, the National Bank of Detroit and the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company. With initial funds from these three firms, the Extension Services Department was opened in March, 1957, as a part of the Founders Society program.

Extension Services works in cooperation with School Boards, Library Commissions, Art Associations and other recognized community organizations. The community must provide space and certain other facilities for educational activities. Extension Services provides qualified instructors and material and tailors the curriculum to suit the needs of the particular area. A moderate fee is charged to cover the materials and instruction.





Co-ordinator of the Institute's Extension Services Program, William A. McGonagle, with first and second graders in Livonia



During the summer of 1957, four Extension Services centers were established in Birmingham, Dearborn, Redford Township and Livonia with a total of 448 young people first grade through high school enrolled. The cooperating organizations in these four communities are the Bloomfield Art Association, the Dearborn Public Schools, the Redford Township Library Commission and the Livonia Board of Education.

Various media of the artist were available to these young artists — paint, clay, construction paper, wire, graphics equipment and other materials. Objects from the Museum's study collections were used as stimulation. These examples were offered to show what had been done by great artists and how — not as pat solutions. Originality of thought and intelligent treatment of materials were emphasized. These goals were achieved.

The summer workshop series in the four centers was received so enthusiastically that fall and winter activities are now under way in eleven suburban communities, with one community already requesting a second center. In these centers the curriculum includes preschool classes for children and their mothers, workshops for young people of elementary and secondary school age and workshops for adult amateurs. For interested adults, specific instruction in oil, watercolor, sculpture, design and history of art is available.

The premise of all Extension Service programs is enjoyment and appreciation of art through the study of Museum objects and by working with the materials of the artist. With the continued enthusiasm and fine cooperation shown thus far, this enjoyment of art will continue to spread to more and more communities in the greater Detroit area.

WILLIAM A. MC GONAGLE

*Co-ordinator, Extension Services*

## **AMERICA IN PRINTS**

During America's colonial years, the European printmaker was called upon frequently to engrave and publish the charts and drawings of exotic peoples and places observed by adventurers in their New World travels. These published pictorial reports found a keen audience in a Europe that was becoming increasingly involved financially and politically in the fortunes of the American colonies. Our print of *Hendrick Great Sachem of the Mohawks*<sup>1</sup> (ca. 1756) published in London by the firm of Elizabeth Bakewell presented to the curious the face of a chieftain loyal to the English crown and a powerful pawn in the French-English struggle for dominion in the colonies of the mid-eighteenth century. A more refined vision of the face of the Americas is contained in a second print from an English source: *A View in Hudson's River of Pakepsey (Poughkeepsie) and the Catts Kill Mountains*<sup>2</sup> which was "sketch'd on the spot by his Excellency Governor Pownal(1)," an Englishman of considerable influence in colonial affairs. This sketch, executed some time before his final





*The brave old Hendrick the great SACHEM or Chief of the Mohawk Indians.  
one of the Six Nations now in Alliance with & Subject to the King of Great Britain.  
Sold by Eliz. Bakewell opposite British Lane in Cornhill.*

HENDRICK GREAT SACHEM OF THE MOHAWKS (ca. 1756)  
Line engraving, colored, published by ELIZABETH BAKEWELL  
Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957



return from America to the political scene in London in 1759, shows a sensitivity on the part of the author to the natural beauty of the American landscape which was surely essential to his uncommonly broad vision of the potentialities of this new land and its future place among nations. The engraver Paul Sandby, a landscape painter and engraver of some note, is considered to be the first among eighteenth century topographical recorders in England to introduce sensitive notations of individual landscape and foliage into a theme generally marked by extreme mechanical regularity. This print is the result of a happy collaboration of senses before the prospect of the natural beauty of an intoxicatingly broad and beautiful land.

In the early years of the new Republic, America proved able to provide the artists and craftsmen to make possible the publication of this country's notions about itself. Working from paintings by accomplished home-grown painters, professional engravers such as Cornelius Tiebout were able to offer to an interested nation the dignified lineaments and particular attributes by which the nation might familiarize itself with its political leaders and congratulate itself upon the appearance of its prophets. Tiebout, working from a painting by Rembrandt Peale, published a popular image of *Thomas Jefferson*<sup>3</sup> (ca. 1801), statesman, scientist and philosopher worthy of his role of president and chief statesman.

The Yankee prowess in battles at sea won for America a confidence in her strength. These moments of high national adventure were recorded and published to adorn the civic buildings, households and minds of proud men. The exploits of the captains Stephen Decatur<sup>4</sup> and Isaac Hull<sup>5</sup> as well as the momentous victory of the Battle of Lake Erie<sup>6</sup> were favored subjects for painter and engraver.

With the extension of this nation's populace from coast to coast and from climate to climate during the nineteenth century, the native craftsman found a broad new fund of subject matter for his audience: the extraordinary variety of the American vista. *The Panoramic View of the Falls of the Niagara*<sup>7</sup> (1846) executed by Robert Havell presents to the eye a scene that figured strongly in American imagery from the time of its earliest discovery and strongly in sentimental attachment with the passing of years. This large print may be enjoyed now as at the moment of its appearance, as a highly decorative adjunct to the popular vision of America's identity. Aquatinted and hand colored, this print by Havell is a handsome product by a British artist who had already distinguished himself and his craft by executing all but the first ten plates of Audubon's *Birds of America*.

Other fragments of the popular scene were to become an intimate part of the American vision during the course of the nineteenth century. The publishing firm of Currier and Ives made prints recording the less spectacular habits, habitants and events of the nation and successfully scrubbed into the American mind with lithographic crayon a picture of the everyday scene that is as common and popular to Americans the nation over as our common language and our





PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE FALLS OF THE NIAGARA (1846)

by ROBERT HAVELL, JR.

Aquatint, colored

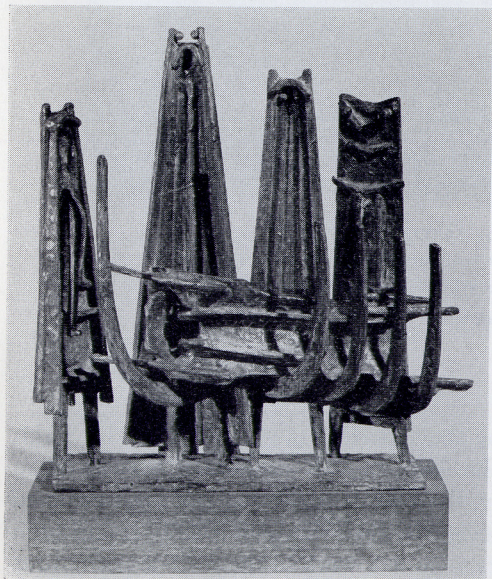
*Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957*



common political tradition. In the *Midnight Race on the Mississippi*,<sup>8</sup> a race between the steamboats "Memphis" and "James Howard," we have an image as American as Mark Twain, an image understood and shared with a variety of associations peculiar to the viewer's locale or date of birth . . . but common to the American vision of itself. Certainly, we owe a tribute to the image-coining power of the American printmaker.

NICHOLAS SNOW

- <sup>1</sup> Acc. No. 57.136. Line engraving, colored. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.
- <sup>2</sup> Acc. No. 57.131. Etching and line engraving. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.
- <sup>3</sup> Acc. No. 57.130. Stipple engraving. (Stauffer 3181.) Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.
- <sup>4</sup> Acc. No. 57.133. "*The Frigate United States . . . and the Macedonian*" (1812) by SAMUEL SEYMOUR after Thomas Birch. Line engraving, colored. (Olds 163; Stauffer 2879.) Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.
- <sup>5</sup> Acc. No. 57.134. "*The U. S. Frigate Constitution . . . and the Guerrière*" (1813) by CORNELIUS TIEBOUT after Thomas Birch. Line engraving, colored. (Olds 126; Stauffer 3206.) Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.
- <sup>6</sup> Acc. No. 57.137. *Battle on Lake Erie, Fought Sept. 10, 1813*. First View published by Murray, Draper, Fairman and Co. Sully and Kearny, *delt.* Line engraving. (Stauffer 2288.) Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.
- <sup>7</sup> Acc. No. 57.132. Aquatint, colored. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.
- <sup>8</sup> Acc. No. 57.135. Lithograph, colored. Gift of the Gibbs-Williams Fund, 1957.



**ANCESTRAL RITUAL**

by MORRIS BROSE

The Museum Collection Purchase Prize  
The Dr. and Mrs. Meyer O. Cantor Prize  
in the 48th Annual Exhibition for  
Michigan Artists





ANNA WERBE by SARKIS SARKISIAN

The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society Purchase Prize  
The Leon and Josephine Winkelman Foundation Prize  
in the 48th Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists

A precedent was set at the time the above portrait of *Anna Werbe*, by Sarkis Sarkisian, came before the jury of the 48th Annual Exhibition for Michigan Artists. For the first time in its history, the Founders Society Prize was awarded to an artist who had won it twice previously (in 1938 and 1949). It has been rare in recent years also, for top honors to go to a work in the field of portraiture.