

# Bulletin of The Detroit Institute of Arts

Of the City of Detroit

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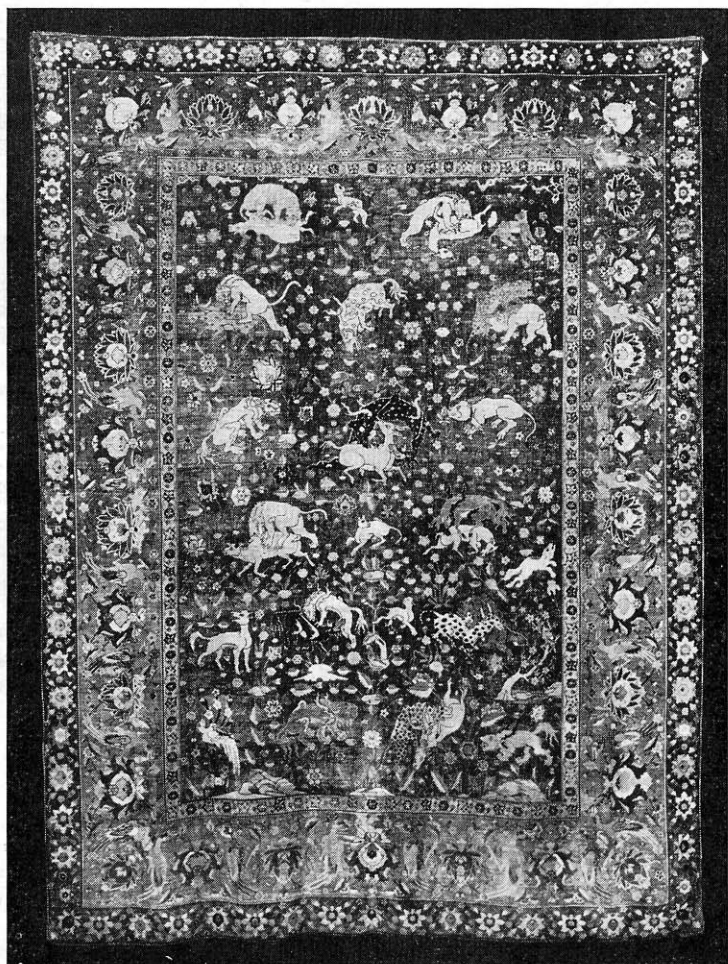
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SILK ANIMAL RUG  
PERSIA, XVI CENTURY  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edsel B. Ford

## PERSIAN SILK ANIMAL RUG OF THE XVI CENTURY

Mr. and Mrs. Edsel B. Ford's gift of a Persian silk animal rug of the XVI century—a type of Oriental rug that has never been surpassed in the history of rug weaving—is one of the most significant donations that the Institute has had in recent years.

The rug belongs to a small group of masterpieces of silk rug weaving which are all of the same fine weave (about 650 knots to the square inch) and of the same size (about 7 feet 10 inches x 5 feet 10 inches), with the exception of two larger hunting carpets, one of which formerly belonged to the Emperor of Austria and another in the collection of Baron Edmond de Rothschild in Paris. They may all be attributed to the same manufactory—most likely the court manufactory of the Shah of Persia—and to the same period, the middle and latter part of the XVI century. Some show a pattern of arabesques and flowers, as the one formerly belonging to Mr. Pierpont Morgan, now in the possession of Mr. Widener; two more in the Altman collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York; and one in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris. The others show fighting animals in the center field. To this smaller group belongs our rug, its companion piece in the Altman collection, a third with the same border but a different center field in the museum of the castle of the former German emperor in Berlin, and a fourth in the Aynard collection at Lyons which has the same center field as ours but a different border.\* That our rug should have an exact companion in the rug in the Altman collection is nothing unusual, as we know that some of the finest rugs were made in pairs, e. g., the pair of rugs from the Ardebil mosque and the so-called "Coronation" rug belonging to Mr. Clarence H. Mackay with its companion piece in the Berlin Museum.

The composition of our rug is very wonderful, in design as well as in color

scheme. The fighting animals in the center field show the extraordinary ability of the Persian artist to accommodate plastic forms to a flat surface and to give them a remarkable expression of life and motion through a most vivid silhouette. As in all great Oriental art, a clear observation of nature is combined with a strong sense for conventionalization. Among the groups of fighting animals are lions, tigers, leopards and panthers killing deer, gazelles and oxen; bears and tigers fighting with each other; and in one case two fantastic animals biting each other, their form obviously under the influence of Chinese stylization. We observe this Chinese influence in the design of a number of the other animals, especially in the shape of their tails and the curious flames which come from the shoulders of some of them, reminding us of the Chinese kilin animals. This Chinese influence, which we also notice in the sponge-like motive in the upper part of the floral background, does not mean that Persian rug making was in any way influenced by the Chinese, who neither at that nor any later period produced rugs in any way comparable to the Persians (in fact very little is yet known of Chinese rugs of so early a period), but that the Persian miniature painter who made the pattern for the rug was fond of using certain Chinese motives so as to give to his composition a strange, fantastic look in the eyes of his countrymen, as it does in ours. This Chinese influence, which in no way interferes with the remarkable originality of the Persian artist, is characteristic of the best Persian art at its height in the XVI century, especially during the second half.

In our rug the fighting groups are interspersed with single animals roaring angrily at each other, and with others which escape in terrible fright. The humorous sense of the designer is revealed in the design of a few young hares and fawns, and a curious kind of animal, one of

\*Reproduced in an excellent article by R. Meyer-Riefstahl, "Three Silk Rugs in the Altman Collection," *Art in America*, Vol. IV, 1916.

them gracefully stepping about in the center and another at the left cheerfully barking and looking away from the blood-thirsty scenes without moving. A peaceful contrast to the warring beasts is formed by an enchanting background of the most varied kind of small flowers, and several blossoming trees which we find in the lower part growing up from hilly ground, with long-tailed, vividly colored birds in their branches.

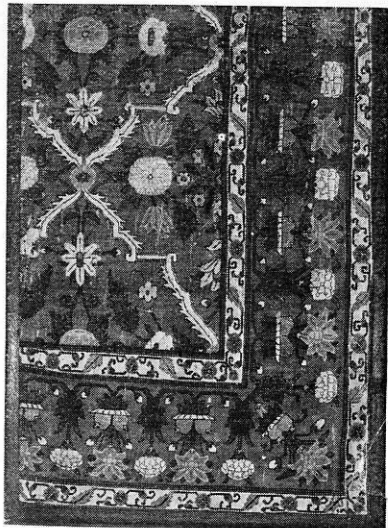
The somewhat restless design of the center is carefully held together by the wonderful border of peonies between alternating gold and silver pheasants, which, while not lacking movement, has a fine rhythmical swing, inasmuch as an almost continuous curve leads from the head and tail of one bird to those of the adjoining one. The continuity of the main border, as well as the small one of fine smaller flowers, and the outer one on dark ground which forms a final frame, binds the whole composition together.

The color composition is not less beautiful, the center field having a rose pink background, and the pheasant border a green one, the predominating colors of the design being in black, yellow and blue, alternating in a most pleasing way and all colors having a fine lustre comparable to the iridescence of early Persian fayence and glass. The use of different shades of light and dark blue is unusual and not often found in Persian rugs, some of the animals being executed in sky blue, while some of the peonies have a dark blue center.

The details of the color and design of the flowers in the background vary from the companion piece in the Metropolitan Museum, proving that the weavers used their own judgment and did not copy in a mechanical way as modern weavers do. In the same way the rug itself is full of little variations and irregularities. For instance, the pheasants in the upper and lower corners turn their heads in different directions, and the peonies in the upper narrow border have light blue while those in the lower one have dark blue centers,

which gives to the rug the richness of invention characteristic of all great art.

We find many analogies to the design of our rug in the Persian manuscripts illuminated by the best painters at the Persian court, especially in the paintings of Behzad, Mirak and Sultan Mohamed.



FRAGMENT OF XVI CENTURY  
INDIAN RUG

Gift of Mr. Vincent D. Cliff

A manuscript with extraordinarily fine border containing fighting animals of much the same character as those in our rug, in the collection of Dr. Sarre in Berlin, is dated 1557. There can be no doubt that the group to which our rug belongs must be of the same period, that of Shah Ismail (who united Persia in 1519), and his successors Thamasp, Abbas I and Abbas II, which was the height of the splendour of the Persian court at Ispahan.

With this rug Mr. and Mrs. Ford have given for loan three fine so-called "Polish" rugs, which represent the next stage in the development of Persian rugs made in the court manufactory. The name "Polish" is quite misleading, and was adopted in 1878 when the first examples of this type of rug were shown at the Paris Exposition. As they had

come from Poland they were thought to be of Polish origin. But their Persian origin has now long been established, and we know from documents that they were often sent as gifts from the Shah of Persia to European courts in the years from 1600 to 1650, and that they were executed at this time and later in the Imperial manufactory. These rugs show clearly the development in design and color from the group to which the animal rug belongs. They also are executed in silk, but are not of quite the same close weave and have gold and silver threads. The smallest is the most common size of these Polish rugs, which seems to have been a standard size used by the shah for gifts to European courts. The long narrow one, the earliest, is a rarer size but one which happens to be particularly well represented in America (e. g., in the Rockefeller, Widener, Altman and Senator Clark collections); while the third, a large, square-shaped rug, is, so far as I can remember, unique, but is very likely the latest of the three, as its style is closely related to the so-called "Ispahan," which date into the later part of the XVII century.

It is most encouraging that the Art Institute is able to begin its small collec-

tion with a masterpiece of the highest order, as so far the few rugs owned by the Museum did not represent the art of rug weaving in Persia, where the finest and most subtle rugs of the East were made, especially in the great period of the XV, XVI and XVII centuries, a period corresponding to the height of Renaissance art in Europe. We have a few specimens of Turkish rugs: two small Holbein carpets of the XVI century and a typical Ushak of the XVII century—types of rugs which we see used in Italy, the Netherlands and England in paintings of court personages by Van Dyck and Rubens—while a fine fragment of a XVI century Indian rug given to the Institute recently by Mr. Vincent D. Cliff represents the third great center of rug weaving in the Near East. As this example, which is said to have come from a palace at Japur, shows, the Indo-Persian weavers were strongly influenced by the Persian master rugs, and came very near to them in fineness of weaving and in velvet-like surface, while they have an original design of their own, more stiff and regular than the Persian, but interesting in the clear conventionalization of the floral design and the open framework.

W. R. V.

## A BRONZE GROUP BY ANTONIO SUSINI

(AFTER A MODEL BY GIOVANNI DA BOLOGNA)

It is a curious coincidence that almost simultaneously with the gift of the Persian animal rug, the Art Institute acquired a bronze group which shows a motive of fighting animals somewhat similar to the different groups in the rug, but seen from the realistic European point of view. Unquestionably the motive used by Giovanni da Bologna came from the Orient—its home from the earliest period—for in Italy at this time there was as little chance of seeing lions in nature as nowadays.

This group of a lion killing a horse shows this artist—the most important sculptor of bronze statues of the later Renaissance

period and the one exhibiting the greatest virtuosity among all the followers of Michelangelo—in his most daring mood, using a most vivid imagination combined with clear realistic observation. Although we know that this famous bronze, which exists in several replicas, has been attributed to Giovanni da Bologna since his own time, when it was described by his contemporary, Baldinucci, in his list of Giovanni's works, curious to say the piece which the Institute has acquired is signed "Antonio Susini, Opus Fe." We know, however, from letters of Giovanni da Bologna himself, that this pupil and friend of his made a number of casts from his



LION KILLING A HORSE  
BY ANTONIO SUSINI

models, so the word *opus* in this case most likely refers only to the remarkably fine cast of the bronze, while there is no reason to doubt that the model is by Giovanni da Bologna.

Only recently the Victoria and Albert Museum of London acquired a bronze horse signed by Antonio Susini, an account of which was published by the director of this museum, Mr. Eric Maclagan, in the February number of the Burlington Magazine. Mr. Maclagan remarks: "So far as I know, this is the only bronze with an authentic signature of Antonio Susini.

There are several signed bronzes by Francesco Susini (the nephew of Antonio); and both his contemporaries, Pietro Tacca and Adriaen de Vries, occasionally signed small equestrian figures. But any signed Italian bronze, even of the later Renaissance period, is a thing rare enough to deserve recording." Our bronze is therefore important not only from an esthetic point of view, as it is one of Giovanni da Bologna's most successful compositions, but also as a document, as it is the second known bronze signed by Antonio Susini.

W. R. V.

## A MADONNA BY MATTEO DI GIOVANNI

Among the artists in the Institute's collection of paintings of the XV century school of Siena—this fascinating school whose lyrical and poetic artists were entirely devoted to mystic dreams—Matteo di Giovanni (about 1430-1495), the most important of all, was not represented. A most generous gift of an enchanting work by his hand which Mrs. Horace E. Dodge has presented to the Museum, makes it possible to study his lovable art in connection with the other works of the Sieneese school, giving a lasting pleasure to those who like at times to turn away from modern life to the devotion and splendour of late Gothic art. For although we usually place the Sieneese art of this period in the early Renaissance, there is as yet little of the worldliness of the Florentine masters in Matteo's work, and none of the purity of the mediaeval spirit seems to be lost in this lofty representation of the Madonna which once adorned an altar in a Gothic church, where the rich gold of the nimbs and adornment of the garments glowed in the evening sun that streamed through the windows. In such surroundings we should imagine the picture, with the adoring men and women of Siena before it, looking at the beautiful Virgin with her far-seeing melancholy eyes, the happy, naively playing child who knows naught of the future, the smiling angels in their brown and red robes, and the two saints known to everyone in Siena for the fame they had given to their city in the eyes of believers all over the world: St. Catherine of Siena in the robe of a Dominican nun with the white lily in her hand, and St. Bernardino who shows his glowing heart to the faithful spectator.

Yet with all the devotional sense of early art, with all the simplicity of the symmetrical arrangement and flat decoration, how modern seems this work in its subtlety of expression, in the sensitiveness of the gestures and in the refinement of its decorative color scheme! How expressive is the face of the Madonna with its veiled eyes with their heavy eyelids, the nose with its small, drawn-in nostrils, the delicately drawn line of the lips! How exquisite is the contrast between her pale and serious appearance, with the black mantle covering her head like the garb of a nun, and the cheerful child with its red cheeks and blond hair, gaily dressed in a pretty, transparent white garment caught about the waist with a cord! How beautiful is the color combination, in which the dark, almost black mantle of the Virgin stands out against the brilliant gold of the background, enlivened by the red spots of color in the angel's and St. Bernardino's costume on the left and the white of St. Catherine's on the right!

This is the second work from the hand of Matteo to find its way to Detroit, the first having been the charming Madonna belonging to Mrs. James S. Holden, whose loan of the painting to the Institute during the winter months all lovers of Italian primitive art will remember with pleasure (see December BULLETIN).

W. R. V.



MADONNA AND CHILD WITH S. CATHERINE AND S. BERNARDINO  
SIENA, CA. 1330-1335.

Gift of Mrs. Horace E. Dodge

## A XIV CENTURY FRENCH MINIATURE PAINTING

Of peculiar interest is the gift of a French miniature painting recently presented to the Institute by Mrs. John S. Newberry—not alone because it is an example of the art of miniature painting of that charming period, the XIV century, but also because of the romantic interest attached to it, representing as it does Abaelard receiving one of the famous love letters from Heloise. It freshens in our mind the sad romance of this unhappy pair, who take rank with the famous lovers of history—with Dante and Beatrice, Petrarch and Laura, Aucassin and Nicolette. Who has not been moved by the sad fate of Heloise, separated at so early an age from her lover but continuing to love and yearn for him to the very end of her long life?

Our painting shows Abaelard with his head resting in his hand, the other hand holding a partly unrolled letter from Heloise. Only the Latin superscription is shown: "*Domino meo imo patri conjugii meo imo fratri ancilla sua imo filia ipsius uxor imo soror. — Abaelardo Heloise.*" ("To her master, rather to a father, to her husband, rather to a brother—his maid or rather daughter, his wife or rather sister, to Abaelard, Heloise.") It is the beginning of the letter in which Heloise, now abbess of the convent of Argenteuil, to which she had been consigned by Abaelard, and for ten years separated from her lover, writes of having just read his *Historia calamitatum* and of the pain it has caused her to be reminded anew of their unhappy intercourse and the treachery

and persecutions which had followed him as the result of it, ending in the burning of his most famous book, *De Unitate et Trinitate divina*, and the mutilation of his own person, and begging him to let her share his sorrows by keeping her informed of them in frequent letters.

The tender, wistful expression on his face and his attitude of brooding mildness are just the sort of thing that these mediaeval painters loved to depict, for they were not given to rendering scenes of action and energy, but delighted most in those gentle, modest expressions of the human spirit that were characteristic of the almost feminine nature of this whole period of history. The dexterity of pen drawing exhibited in our miniature—a characteristic of nearly all the artists at this period—assists in the certainty, tenderness and distinctness with which the work is rendered. A soft flow of drapery has now taken the place of the antique folds and a subdued color has replaced the almost harsh brightness of the work of the previous century. The natural vellum has been left for the flesh parts, light touches of color being added to the lips, hair, eyes and cheeks. The soft blue of Abaelard's robe, relieved by touches of red in the sleeves and lining, and the naively rendered, flower-strewn grass, contrast pleasingly with the gold background.

The miniature will be on view in the Gothic Hall, where it will be a welcome addition to our small collection of mediaeval miniature paintings.

J. W.



## MUSEUM NOTES

An exhibition of lithographs by the late George Bellows will hang in the Print Galleries during the month of April. These lithographs, selected by two of the painter's friends of the artist, were chosen with a view of giving the most adequate idea of the range and power of Bellows as a lithographer. The collection, which covers the early as well as the later work of the artist, illustrates all the best qualities of Bellows' art—his strong appeal, his directness of expression and vigorous presentation, as well as the technical mastery that is found in his paintings. Admirers of Bellows the painter will also be admirers of Bellows the lithographer.

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Through the appointment of his Honor Mayor John W. Smith, Mr. Edsel B. Ford becomes an Arts Commissioner March 1st for a term of four years, succeeding Mr. Henry G. Stevens, whose term expired at that date. Mr. Ford's substantial interest in the work of the Museum is manifested in his recent magnificent gift reported elsewhere in this bulletin.

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The eleventh Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American Artists will open with a reception Tuesday evening, April 21st. More than one hundred paintings have been selected from the important exhibitions of the East and from the studios of the artists for this exhibit, which promises to be more interesting than ever before.

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Gallery III will shortly be redecorated and set aside as a "Gallery of New Ac-

cessions," where recent gifts and purchases can be seen by the public for a period of thirty days before they are distributed to their respective departments.

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The Detroit Museum of Art Founders Society has again received from Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb the sum of \$1,000 for a traveling scholarship. This scholarship will be open to any artist, art student, designer or craftsman between the ages of eighteen and thirty years who is a native born citizen of the United States and a resident of Wayne County for at least two years prior to the time of the competition. There will be a preliminary competition in May and a final competition in June. Artists and art students eligible for this competition may secure circulars and all information from Mr. Clyde H. Burroughs, Secretary.

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Through the gift of Mrs. Heatley Green, a water color entitled "Misty Morning," by Katherine McEwen, has been added to the permanent collection. This is the second example owned by the Museum of the work of this painter, who was formerly a resident of Detroit.

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The monthly meeting of the Print Club will be held at the Institute, Monday evening, April 13, at 8:15. Miss Isabel Weadock, Curator of Prints, will conduct a brief discussion on lithography, which will be followed by a talk on the Bellows lithographs now hanging in the Print Gallery.



XIV CENTURY FRENCH MINIATURE  
PAINTING

Gift of Mrs. John S. Newberry

## EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF LOUIS XIV GIVEN

Louis XIV, "Le Roi Soleil," in all his glory, seated on a spirited charger, has found a place in the Detroit Institute of Arts. For this subject, a signed bronze equestrian statue after the colossal original by Francois Girardon, is the gift of Julius Goldschmidt. In its rich, warm bronze, with a velvety patina, it measures forty-two and one-half inches in height.

Girardon's sculpture well interprets the spirit of the day, having something of the baroque, but still academic and formal, and with an air of the court. It was at this time, 1648, that the Academy was supreme. Its director, Le Brun, determined the course not only of all the visual arts, but even the taste of the king.

Girardon did as the times dictated, like most of the artists who wished to live and "get on successfully." In fact, on one occasion Louis XIV gave him a thousand crowns. The sculptor made no less than sixteen likenesses of the king, in one of which he is represented as Apollo conquering Python. An equestrian statue of Louis by Bernini was changed by Girardon to the likeness of Marcus Curtius.

The sculptor's large statue of the king riding on horseback, which was placed in the center of the Place Vendome in 1699, was later torn down to make cannon for the Revolution. One of the king's feet from the statue is in the Louvre. A somewhat smaller replica was given in 1694 to Bouffler for his chateau. Later it was on public view in Beauvais and was finally destroyed at the time of the Revolution. A good criticism calls the statue "simple, impressive, severely classical and worthy of the great." Another reduction was made by the sculptor and bears his signature in full, and it is this replica of which the Detroit Institute of Arts is the recipient. It is also to be found in the Louvre and the Museum at Dresden.

Francois Girardon was born in Troyes on the seventeenth of March, 1628. He early studied with a wood carver, Baudesson. At that time Gothic art flourished in this region, its ecclesiastical

sculpture offering a rare opportunity by which this youth profited. He was sent by Chancellor Seguier to Paris, where he attended school. He was admitted to the Academy in 1657, and incidentally became a professor there two years later, director in 1674, and chancellor in 1695. Noticed by Chancellor Seguier when in Paris, he went to Italy in accordance with the wish of Louis XIV. In 1667 Colbert, also a dictator working for the king, sent him to Toulouse. There and at Marseilles Girardon modeled for the royal navy, following Le Brun's designs. He moved about a great deal, visiting Genoa and Rome when in Italy and collecting art treasures for royalty. After the death of Le Brun, about 1690, he became Inspector General. In fact, he was very prosperous at the end, although he had already begun to turn from academic to a more creative work, as his assignment to Puget suggests. He died September 1st, 1715, the same day as Louis XIV, and was buried in one of the many tombs which he had carved. One of his most highly esteemed works is the tomb which he designed for Richelieu in the Church of the Sorbonne. It rests in the only remaining part of the university buildings designed by Le Brun, according to the scheme outlined by Richelieu himself. Characteristic of the day are the figures on this tomb. One, "Religion," raises the head of Richelieu, while "Science" is in tears and "Cupid" weeps.

Perhaps the most popular of Girardon's group is the "Abduction of Proserpina," which is in the "Bosquet of the Colonnade" designed by Le Brun in the gardens of Versailles. It was undoubtedly suggested by Gian Bologna's "Rape of the Sabines," a small version of which is in the Detroit Institute of Arts.

This equestrian statue, in spite of its reduction, has great poise and dignity and even a suggestion of the monumental. With head wreathed in radiant curls and dressed in classical apparel Louis rides



BRONZE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF LOUIS XIV  
BY FRANCOIS GIRARDON

like a Roman god. His mount seems aware that he is in the service of the king. Powerful, fiery, alert, he advances inevitably, like everything else during the reign of the grand monarch.

The sculptor expresses a dynamic force but understands that the illusion of actual movement is not in best taste for sculpture. The design is clear and beautifully massed. It has not the rhythm nor undulating volumes of Verrocchio's "Col-

leone" in Venice, but rather resembles the more severe formality of the II century Marcus Aurelius statue in Rome, which Girardon undoubtedly saw on the Capitol. The quality of surface makes for a delightful play of light and shadow over the whole composition. This recent gift is an important and valuable addition to the group of bronzes, among which there have been very few XVIII century examples.

R. P.

## APRIL EVENTS, 1925

## CALENDAR OF EXHIBITS

- March 24th to April 15th.* Exhibition of sculpture of Ivan Mestrovic.
- April 21st to May 31st.* Eleventh Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American Artists.
- April 1st to April 30th.* Children's Museum—"Animal Welfare Week" Prize Poster Exhibit.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 5th, Sunday, 3:30 p. m.* Lecture, "The Art and Life of Spain," by Dudley Crafts Watson.
- April 7th, Tuesday, 2:30 p. m.* Lecture, "Old World Masterpieces," by Mrs. Neville Walker.
- April 7th, Tuesday, 8:15 p. m.* Lecture, "The Late Years of Michelangelo," by Dr. W. R. Valentiner, Art Director.
- April 12th, Sunday, 3:30 p. m.* Musical program by the Chamber Music Society of Detroit.
- April 13th, Monday, 8 p. m.* Meeting of the Print Club of Detroit.
- April 14th, Tuesday, 4 to 5 p. m.* Program I. Detroit Teachers Association. "The Splendors of India." Lecture illustrated by Lumiere autochromes of Professor William Sandoz.
- April 15th, Wednesday, 4 to 5 p. m.* Program II. Detroit Teachers Association. "France"—Chateaux, cathedral towns, Brittany, Verdun, the Riviera and the Palace of Fontainebleau. Autochrome illustrations.
- April 16th, Thursday, 4 to 5 p. m.* Program III. Detroit Teachers Association. "The Marvels of Artistic Spain." "Visions of Northern Africa." Autochrome illustrations.
- April 18th, Saturday, 10:00 a. m.* Program for public school children of sixth, seventh, eighth and High School grades. Professor Sandoz's Lumiere autochromes. "The Splendors of India."
- April 19th, Sunday, 3:30 p. m.* Lecture, "The Romance of the Northwest," by Dr. Charles A. Payne. (Illustrated.)
- April 21st, Tuesday, 8:15 p. m.* Opening view of the Eleventh Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American Artists.
- April 26th, Sunday, 3:30 p. m.* Musical program by String Quartet from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.
- April 27th, Monday, 4 p. m.* Lecture on the Eleventh Annual Exhibition of Paintings by American Artists, by Reginald Poland, to the Art Teachers of the Public Schools. (Arranged by Miss Mabel Arbuckle.)