

STUDENTS
OF
THE EIGHT

AMERICAN MASTERS

ca. 1910-ca. 1960

SORDONI ART GALLERY
WILKES COLLEGE

APRIL 12-MAY 17, 1981

Sponsored by the
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
and
The John Sloan Memorial Foundation

FOREWORD

This exhibition is devoted to works by twenty-six American artists who studied under members of The Eight, one of the seminal groups of early twentieth century progressive artists in this country. This show provides a sequel to our 1979 exhibition of The Eight themselves.

No attempt has been made here to be comprehensive, since over a period of some forty years there were literally hundreds of students, representing all degrees of achievement. The Eight unquestionably influenced many artists who were not their students, as well, although those influences are usually more difficult to ascertain. The artists chosen for this exhibition are generally regarded as major figures in American art, and together they represent a wide range of styles and attitudes, indeed, a virtual cross-section of art in the United States between 1910 and 1960. The exhibition, therefore, illuminates the vitality and diversity of that period, as it also defines, at least in part, the heritage of those among The Eight who shared their ideals through teaching.

Numerous persons and institutions deserve recognition for their important contributions to this project. I should first like to extend our deep appreciation to the lenders, whose generosity provided the works which make up the exhibition. We are also greatly indebted to the John Sloan Memorial Foundation and the Pennsylvania Council for the Arts, which provided the funding for the project.

I wish to thank personally those persons in the gallery and at the college whose help and cooperation were significant: Cara Berryman, Exhibitions Coordinator; Albert Margolies, chairman of the Advisory Commission, and the members of the Commission; Dr. Thomas Kelly, Dean of External Affairs; and Robert S. Capin, President of the College.

Finally, I extend special thanks to Mrs. Helen Farr Sloan for her invaluable advice and support, and for her introductory essay in this catalogue.

WILLIAM STERLING
Director

INTRODUCTION

by
Helen Farr Sloan

Any serious thoughtful observer of an exhibition of paintings by the group of artists known as "The Eight" would be puzzled by the term *Ashcan* school used to identify the work they showed at Macbeth Gallery in 1908. Words, published long after the event, have left an indelible impression, a misleading interpretation of the philosophy that brought these artists together as friends grouped around Robert Henri. He was the natural leader of the progressive avant-garde at the turn of the century, the man John Sloan called "The Abraham Lincoln of American Art."

The diversity of personalities, talents, and concomitant styles of painting shown by those eight artists reveal one aspect of their philosophy: respect for diversity of creative talent, and the desire to provide opportunities for art to flourish, with freedom of expression. They wanted to demonstrate the value of work done by American artists, working for themselves unfettered by academic or commercial demands; on their own initiative as "independent" creative personalities. At that time, in 1908, they had a common interest in depicting the everyday world. (Even Davies' lyrical nymphs in mountain landscapes are idealized concepts of a natural real world.) There has often been a mistaken idea that the group had an interest in politics, or a desire to depict urban slums. In fact, Sloan was the only member of the group who ever became interested in political matters, and not until several years after that exhibition. As for the subject matter, while Henri encouraged his friends and students to paint *life* — the everyday world of city and countryside — most of the city subjects show everyday people engaged in recreation. Parks and restaurants and bathing beaches provided what Sloan called his subject matter: "Bits of joy in human life."

The series of independent group shows, beginning in 1901 at the Allan Gallery and culminating in the large Independent Show of 1910, provided experience in organizing exhibitions. The 1910 show was a precursor of the Armory Show of 1913 which brought an illuminating cross-section of modern art to this country for the first time. These exhibitions were organized by the artists, largely financed by themselves and in the case of the 1913 Armory Show, a few art collectors like Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney and Miss Lizzie Bliss. The friends and followers of The Eight taught their contemporaries the importance of voluntary public service, that very fine old characteristic of America's pioneers. The defense of independence, the protection of diversity in democratic cultural institutions; these are principles which the group taught in practical form.

Several of The Eight were also teachers of drawing and painting in the formal sense. Henri and Sloan and George Luks taught for many years, both privately and at schools like the New York School of Art, and the Art Students League. Some of their most distinguished pupils are seen in this exhibition. It is so good to see that there is a happy extraordinary variety of work — none of it imitating the original teachers. For, in fact, a number of them, having learned the lesson of responsible independence (freedom, not license), learned again from other teachers like Kenneth Hayes Millar or Jan Matulka some insights which helped their talents to develop yet another synthesis. In every case the talent has been forged with integrity.

In addition to the well-known teachers who had formal classes, it may be forgotten that a man like Maurice Prendergast had pupils who learned to appreciate the superb design and color of medieval miniatures from France and Persia and India, from him and his brother Charles. And it was Prendergast whose appreciation for Cezanne stimulated interest on the part of his friends who had not seen the work of that great modern, who died in 1906. In Sloan's day of 1910 he tells of finding an article in *The*

Burlington Magazine, "Was much interested in the work of Cezanne, some of which was reproduced. A big man this, his fame is to grow." Of course Sloan had never been able to go abroad, having to support his family from the age of sixteen; but even if he had gone to Paris he might not have had the opportunity to see much work by the moderns in the Nineties. Van Wyck Brooks, who knew Prendergast, said that Sloan told him how Prendergast would come in the room and repeat to his friends: "You should know Cezanne!" It was not until the Armory Show exhibited a group of Cezanne's paintings that the work was known in color, in this country. Now that we are accustomed to superb color reproductions in books that survey the world of Impressionists and Modernists, it is exceedingly hard to realize that artists, even those who lived for years in France, were not really familiar with the work. It was shown so little, in a few independent shows, in restaurants and shops run by paint dealers. Maybe it has been more exciting for art students and even mature artists, to make some discoveries, bit by bit — to assimilate fresh ideas without being swamped by what Lewis Mumford has described as image-fatigue, being punch-drunk on familiarity with too much art.

Artists at the time of The Eight were not over-exposed. Their immediate problem was that in this country there were so few places to exhibit work. The academic juries had a rigid political control over what got into the big public exhibitions. There were very few art dealers. Sentimental realism, genteel subject matter, imitation impressionism; these styles and subjects were acceptable. "The Eight" was formed by an accidental encounter with the jury system of the National Academy. It was a little protest made by associates of Robert Henri who had been shocked by the negative action of a jury that threw out the work of his students and friends. The show was organized spontaneously. There was no purpose other than to demonstrate the need to encourage the idea of "Open Door" exhibitions, such as the 1910 Independent Show that

they were able to organize later. (Henri also initiated the MacDowell jury system, based on proportional representation.) The pupils and associates of the men around Henri have carried back to all parts of the United States this attitude toward open door exhibitions, opportunities to show by both professional and amateur artists. They have been a leavening in the world of American art. Their viewpoint in one direction was "inclusive — open the doors of opportunity" but they were not opposed to the principle that Alfred Stieglitz advocated, "exclusive — selection of quality." Only the Henri crowd felt that the open door must come first, to counteract the power politics of fashion in art institutions. It would always be necessary to demonstrate and defend the democratic principle in cultural matters to encourage variety of expression, to respect independence.

The wisdom of this point of view should be clear from study of cultural history in the past hundred years. Suppose Ryder had stopped painting because his work was not appreciated critically and financially! What a gap there would be in our artistic heritage if Prendergast had stopped making frames to earn the free time to paint his joyful scenes. What an unimaginable loss!

The students who gathered around The Eight held all kinds of jobs to support their own creative work — night watchmen, accountants, dish washers, illustrators, designers, actors and authors. Some became administrators of the WPA art projects. Several became known as teachers. Richard Lahey ran the Corcoran School of Art, and Kimon Nicolaidis' book *The Natural Way to Draw* has reached several generations of art students.

Today the historical situation for young artists is so different from that faced by The Eight. Now there are more opportunities to obtain college scholarships and to exhibit creative work. New York is not the only art center in the country. Contemporary museums have been established in many places. There is perhaps a more insidious pressure to

be influenced by the fast moving cycles of fashion in contemporary art, a serious pressure for young people to contend with. The cost of living is more complicated by the income that must be set aside for taxes. It usually becomes a necessity for a creative artist to cultivate a side-line in teaching or craftsmanship which can provide a reliable means of support. Recent history does teach this lesson once again that only a small percentage of unique talents can survive with integrity by counting on contemporary sales. Henri, for instance, made a comfortable living with his portrait painting. In addition to the teaching, Bellows found patrons early in his career but Hopper was a late bloomer. He was in his forties before his talent matured and from that time on he did have patronage. Stuart Davis and David Smith had many lean years before the late chapter of financial security. Students, and even professional artists need to be reminded of these realistic facts — to keep perspective on their work and regain the courage to persevere.

THE STUDENTS OF THE EIGHT IN AMERICAN ART

by
William Sterling

*"The two dominant forces in my early art education were the teachings of Robert Henri whose school I attended and the Armory Show of Modern European art in 1913. These influences were foremost in forming my ideas and taste about what a modern picture should be. Both were revolutionary in character, and stood in direct opposition to traditional and academic concepts of art."*¹

(STUART DAVIS)

After World War II, New York City emerged as the capital of the art world, thereby ending the leadership of Paris, which had prevailed for more than a century. For the first time in its history, the United States led the way to the most radical developments in art. The war had severely disrupted the cultural life of Europe, and even before the war many European artists and intellectuals had emigrated to America to avoid persecution. They brought with them their entire repertoire of avant-garde ideas. At the same time, a generation of American artists achieved its maturity in modernism and stood ready to explore new frontiers.

Prior to the war, American artists had, for the most part, been followers rather than leaders. In the late nineteenth century, a few eccentrics, such as Ryder, created their own highly personal expressions, but had little influence on their contemporaries. Several others, such as Whistler and Cassatt, managed to join the European avant-garde, but they remained expatriates. The earliest stirrings of an independent American modernist movement came in the first two decades of this century. In 1908, the famous exhibition of The Eight marked the first significant repudiation of academic dogma and style in art.

The Eight, comprised of Robert Henri, John Sloan, George Luks, Ernest Lawson, William Glackens, Everett Shinn, Arthur B. Davies, and Maurice Prendergast, were never a cohesive group. They were simply congenial spirits who came together for a single exhibition at New York's Macbeth Gallery. But that exhibition was one of the salient

events of American art. Like the earlier independent salons of the Realists and the Impressionists in France, it struck a blow for artistic freedom in the face of a rigidly conservative academy system.

Two years later, Henri, Sloan, Davies, and Walt Kuhn put together a far larger show, the Exhibition of Independent Artists. The taste for adventure and the lure of artistic freedom had begun to spread. The largest and most influential event came in 1913 with the great Armory Show in New York, where the latest European styles were revealed to Americans for the first time *en masse*. The effect of these exhibitions was to break, once and for all, the grip of the academies upon the American art scene. An American artist could now follow his own course without fear of automatic isolation, and the forbidden fruit of European modernism could be tasted without censure.

Two approaches to modernism emerged in the second decade. Henri and his associates took up a rather chauvinistic position, urging American artists to develop an indigenous modernism which would remain independent of European styles. Various realist styles from the "Ash-Can" school to the Regionalists of the 1920s represented this approach. The other approach led to Europe and the adoption of the latest abstract styles, particularly Cubism, Futurism, and later, Surrealism. The prime movers of this approach included the photographer and patron Alfred Stieglitz, Walter Pach, and Arthur B. Davies (who had shared Henri's democratic attitudes more than his tastes). Already by 1915, artists such as Max Weber and Marsden Hartley had gone to Europe and had embraced the very newest discoveries.

The "Europeanists" became the more radical group in terms of artistic style, since they favored the various abstract forms which the term "Modern Art" has usually been associated with. The Henri group remained relatively conservative in its adherence to more or less naturalistic styles.

Before World War I, The Eight had enjoyed the status of America's avant-garde. Their unsentimental and uncompromising realism was coupled with an outspoken liberalism in matters of artistic self-determination. Most free-thinking artists of the time adopted their anti-establishment stance, if not their particular styles. This situation changed in the late teens and early twenties, as more and more artists were drawn toward Europe. Some, like Henri's student Patrick Henry Bruce, became expatriates. Others, like another student, Stuart Davis, absorbed European modernism but remained at home.

As a result of the Armory Show and subsequent contacts with visiting avant-garde personalities from abroad (for example, Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia), America's knowledge of European developments grew rapidly and widely. The Stieglitz faction, centered in his "291 Gallery," promoted an artistic formalism which shunned any narrative or illustrational emphasis. Henri's group resisted such formalism, and resolutely maintained that art must first of all communicate ideas, and that content must take precedence over form.

During the years between the two world wars, the relative prominence of one polarity over the other swung back and forth. Especially during the Depression, naturalism enjoyed revitalized popularity, not only in America but in Europe, too. Early abstractionists such as Weber, Hartley, and Morgan Russell returned to figurative work, and generally lost favor with the modernist critics. Only in the forties did a new and unquestionably more original form of abstraction come to the fore in America. It was then that the Abstract Expressionists, led by Pollock and Gorky, burst upon the scene, and inherited the mantle of radicalism from war-torn Europe.

The works which make up this exhibition provide something close to a cross-section of that vital and varied period in American art. They also bear witness to the significant role played by a few brilliant teachers.

"The best advice I have ever given to students under me has been just this: 'Educate yourself, do not let me educate you . . .'"
*"Real students go out of beaten paths, whether beaten by themselves or by others, and have adventure with the unknown."*²
(ROBERT HENRI)

*"Whatever the Henri School may have lacked in systematic discipline was more than made up for by positive contributions . . . By developing the student's confidence in his own perceptions, it gave his work a freshness and personality that was lacking in the student work of other schools."*³
(STUART DAVIS)

*"I don't want to interfere with your way of seeing, if you are seeing things. I have no tricks to teach you. I don't want to teach you my opinions, but if you can get hold of my point of view I don't think it will hurt you. I am here to help you. I want to help you find a purpose, a reason for painting. I can tell you some things about the "how" to paint. Not any one 'how.' Then you must find your way through your own experience and hard work."*⁴
(JOHN SLOAN)

The students of The Eight do indeed constitute a cross-section of American art during the twenties, thirties, and forties. From figurative painters like Bellows and Hopper to abstractionists like Davis and Gottlieb, virtually every new and vital direction was represented. Those among The Eight who were active as teachers by no means imposed narrow doctrine. On the contrary, they cultivated an atmosphere of disciplined self-determination.

During that era of immense growth in America's artistic community, as well as in its aesthetic sophistication, the role played by the sources of artistic information and inspiration was enormous. Exhibitions such as The Eight and the Armory Show opened eyes and minds to radically new ideas and forms. Institutions like the Art Students League allowed artists to experiment with those new ideas. For some young artists, the very sight of the new was enough to rouse them into action, but for most, the teacher remained a crucial catalyst in their transformation.

There were a number of important teachers in the early twentieth century who are identifiable today by the large number of major artists who studied with them. Preeminent with Robert Henri and John Sloan were William Merritt Chase, Kenneth Hayes Miller, and Arthur W. Dow. Probably as many as half of America's historically significant painters, maturing in the teens, twenties, and thirties, studied under one or more of these men. Other than Hans Hofmann and Joseph Albers, perhaps, no teachers since that time have enjoyed such wide influence. Today, as even the formerly most provincial sections of our country have become cosmopolitan (at least in their best schools), the teaching of art has become highly decentralized. New York City may still be the major hub of progressive artistic activity, but most New York artists arrive there *after* their training, nowadays. Virtually every school and every teacher across the land have ready access to the same periodicals, the same reproductions, and often the same exhibitions.

Things were different at the beginning of the century. A few important art academies, and within them a few outstanding instructors, dominated art training in this country, and to some extent aesthetic values as well. Robert Henri had been the prime mover, the original leader of those Philadelphians who made up the nucleus of The Eight: Sloan, Luks, Shinn, and Glackens. Sloan and Luks, in particular, followed Henri in the pursuit of teaching. Lawson and Prendergast also took students on occasion, but they never had the broad impact of Henri and Sloan. Glackens and Davies never taught, although Davies wielded much influence through his activities as an organizer, supporter, and critic. The students of The Eight, therefore, were mostly students of only three members of the group: Henri, Sloan and Luks.

Even before their landmark exhibition, Henri was teaching at the New York School of Art, which was run by William Merritt Chase. He held forth there from 1903 until 1907, then ran his own school until 1912. After that, he

taught at the Art Students League, as well as the progressive Ferrer School. Henri was a born teacher, a charismatic man with strong opinions, sharp insights, and cutting wit. As often as not, his classroom discussions dealt with literature, music, or philosophy. Life was the stuff of art, and Henri encouraged his students to study life as vigorously as they studied art. As Stuart Davis said of his mentor's approach, "art was not a matter of rules and techniques, or the search for an absolute ideal of beauty. It was the expression of ideas and emotions about the life of the time." Henri's method was regarded as radical at the time, but his aim seems clear enough today. He sought to instill his students with a sense of art's relevance to real experience.

John Sloan continued this approach with equal enthusiasm and success. Having taken pupils as early as 1912, he joined the faculty of the Art Student's League in 1916. In 1931, he was elected president of the League, although he resigned the following year after a heated quarrel with the governing board over its refusal to hire the German emigre modernist, George Grosz. He left the League for three years, during which time he taught at Archipenko's Ecole d'Arte and took over the Luks School of Painting upon the death of George Luks in 1933.

During the twenties, Sloan's classes were immensely popular, and like Henri's, they were lively centers of criticism, philosophy, politics, and humor. Sloan shared Henri's sense of the priority of ideas and feeling in painting, as well as his disapproval of "art for art's sake." Yet, Sloan was by no means insensitive to the formalistic concerns of art, which were central to so many modern movements. He once stated that "the subject may be of first importance to the artist when he starts a picture, but it should be of least importance in the finished product. The subject is of no aesthetic significance."⁵

This attitude put Sloan in tune with the younger generation. One of Stuart Davis' few criticisms of Henri

had been that the latter placed too much emphasis on subject matter. Indeed, Henri, much more than Sloan, had resisted the formalistic preoccupations of the Cubists, Fauves, and Futurists, and had sought to minimize their influence on American modernism.

If Henri and Sloan had had only their artistic style to offer their students, little more than a new generation of "Ash-Can" painters would have emerged from their classes. What these teachers did offer their students was considerably more significant. It was an attitude about art and what it meant to be an artist in the twentieth century; it was an attitude about freedom which allowed the student to question any rule or tradition or approach, not excluding those of Henri and Sloan themselves.

It is on this basis that an exhibition of artists so diverse in style can reveal something about the course of modern art in America. Some of these artists studied long and faithfully under one master or the other. Others came into the fold for only a year or less, and never said much about their experience. But it is difficult to imagine that any impressionable young art student was not touched by the spirit of freedom, candor, and common sense which was to be encountered in the classes of Henri and Sloan. Although these masters never became radicals in style, they promoted an openness to new ideas which allowed their students unusual latitude in those days. They were the "progressive educators" of the art schools.

Robert Henri counted among his students, in addition to the aforementioned Stuart Davis, such determined modernists as Patrick Henry Bruce, Morgan Russell, Man Ray, Walter Pach, and Arnold Friedman. Less radical but no less important were Edward Hopper, George Bellows, Rockwell Kent, Guy Pène du Bois, and Glenn Coleman. It is clear that no common element of style binds these men. Rather, it is their sense of independence and their search for an honest means of self-expression which link them to Henri.

Hopper, Bellows, and Coleman remained closer to Henri's style than many students, but each fashioned a strong individual manner. Hopper, of course, eventually emerged as one of the preeminent realists in twentieth century American art. Accepting Henri's view of art as an authentic reflection of life as most of us experience it, Hopper added his own sense of the mystery of existence attendant to special moments of transience and solitude. Like many of his colleagues, he also developed a stronger awareness of the formal structure of his pictures, so that his works came to be admired as much by abstractionists as by realists.

George Bellows and Gifford Beal responded to Henri's feeling for the energy and grandeur of the American scene, and anticipated the Regionalists in their muscular, almost romantic vision of both city and country. Bellows' brash, bravura manner was particularly close to Henri's style. Less concerned with formalist structure, his works look less modern today than Hopper's, but outside the context of modernism, they continue to speak in a powerful expressive language.

The modernists among Henri's students could be thought of as defectors who had bolted from the pack, but it doesn't appear that the master ever seriously objected to their more radical convictions. For example, he kept up a lively and friendly correspondence with Patrick Henry Bruce after the latter had gone to Paris, studied with Matisse, and developed his own abstract style. It is also true that he accepted a wide spectrum of modernists into the various exhibitions he helped to organize between 1908 and 1918. While he remained wary of modernism, Henri was really hostile only to reactionary academicism.

Of the modernists who studied with Henri, none was more brilliant than Stuart Davis, who is generally regarded as one of the greatest painters America has yet produced. Stylistically, his art veered decisively toward synthetic cubism a few years after he left Henri's studio, but one

need not look closely to see the imprint of his master's teaching. When Henri sent Davis and the other students roaming through the streets of New York to capture the real pulse of the city, he planted the seed which ultimately gave Davis' cubism its highly original stamp. Images of city life, from billboards and signs to chain-link fences and cigarette wrappers, were transmitted through jazz-like rhythms and blasting colors. Brasher, bolder, and cleaner than its European counterparts, Davis' cubism epitomized the energy and efficiency of America in the early twentieth century. Henri's "Ash-Can" scene had been distilled into its elemental shapes and rhythms.

John Sloan's roster of students was equally impressive and equally diverse. Perhaps because he was dealing with a younger generation than had Henri, more of his famous students went on into abstraction. Adolph Gottlieb, Barnett Newman, and the sculptors Alexander Calder and David Smith were among the most influential and radical artists of the forties and fifties, and participated in America's succession to leadership in the world of art. As with Henri, it was Sloan's persona and philosophy rather than his artistic style which most affected these later masters.

Sloan was less wary of European modernism than Henri had been, even though he was one of the few major American artists of the time who never visited Europe. Nevertheless, he took a keen interest in the work of men such as Matisse and Picasso, and even shared their interest in African and Pre-Columbian art. Furthermore, he actively supported modernism in his role as president of the Society of Independent Artists, which had been founded in 1917 by Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Walter Pach, William Glackens and others, and which remained an important sustainer of progressive artists until 1944. While he never painted abstractly himself, Sloan said he had learned a great deal about artistic form from the "ultra-moderns."

Of course, Sloan also had a devoted following of realists, such as Reginald Marsh and Aaron Bohrod. Reginald

Marsh, as an inheritor of the "Ash-Can" tradition, became a virtual alter-ego to his contemporary, Edward Hopper. He filled Hopper's silent streets and desolate interiors with teeming life, and in spirit and imagery, if not in style, paralleled the art of Stuart Davis, as well.

Perhaps because of his own experience as an illustrator over the years, Sloan helped to train some of America's leading illustrators, among them Peggy Bacon, Cecil Bell, and Roger Tory Peterson, as well as outstanding cartoonists such as Otto Soglow (famous for "The Little King"), Don Freeman, and Chon Day. Consistent with his democratic attitudes, Sloan made no sharp distinctions between illustration and "fine art."

The catholicity of Sloan's teaching and influence is underscored by the prominence and popularity he enjoyed between the two wars. As a practitioner of realism on the one hand and a supporter of modernism on the other, he easily adjusted to the changing tides of taste which characterized this period. The initial burst of American modernism which followed the Armory Show of 1913 and seemed destined to dominate the American art scene for the generation to come actually subsided after World War I. As in Europe, the energy of radicalism was temporarily spent, and many of the avant-garde were disillusioned by the enormous destruction of the war. In America, the populace adopted a position of isolationism, and American artists, by and large, turned to scene painting and social realism. Just as the fires of modernism were being stoked up again in the late twenties, the Depression dampened them once more.

During the thirties, most of the students of Henri, Sloan, and Luks took part, with thousands of other American artists, in the Federal Arts Project under the W.P.A. Even before that time, many of them had been politically active, usually on the left. Sloan's classes remained a congenial place for social-minded young artists, although his own socialist activism had diminished over the years. In his

youth, Sloan had been a committed radical, and in 1910, he had run, unsuccessfully, for the New York State Assembly on the Socialist ticket. Shortly thereafter, he became art director for the radical magazine "The Masses." Many students of Henri and Sloan worked at one time or another as political cartoonists, including Davis, Coleman, Soglow, and William Gropper. Philip Evergood, a student of Luks, was also one of the outstanding "political" painters of the thirties and forties.

The Depression did not lead to a significant new wave of socialist art in America, however. Nor did Regionalist naturalism remain for long the dominant trend. The modernists, dispersed though they were, stood ready to return to the fore. The world of the twentieth century, in its technological and existentialist complexity, was ultimately their world. Marsh, Beal, and du Bois no longer seemed to be as relevant as Gottlieb, Newman, and Smith. The students of The Eight had spanned the extremes of American art in the first half of our century.

"... (a student should) cultivate an attitude toward his studies which is both flexible and critical. It should be flexible enough so that he can change his mind as often as need be; and it should be critical in that he need not take either the professed 'modern' or the professed 'conservative' at their own evaluation."⁶

(JOHN SLOAN)

NOTES

1. Kelder, Diane (ed.) *Stuart Davis* (New York, 1971) p. 20
2. Henri, Robert, *The Art Spirit* (Philadelphia, 1951) pp. 134, 165
3. Kelder, *Stuart Davis*, p. 22
4. Sloan, John, *Gist of Art* (New York, 1977) p. 7
5. Sloan, *Gist of Art*, p. 41
6. Sloan, *Gist of Art*, p. 11

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Anonymous Lenders

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Altschul

The Brooklyn Museum

The Butler Institution of American Art, Youngstown

Carnegie Institute, Museum of Art, Pittsburgh

University of Connecticut, William Benton Museum of Art

Cornell University, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art

Delaware Art Museum

University of Delaware, Gallery

Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science and Art,
Scranton

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
The Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of American Art,
The Smithsonian Institution

The Pennsylvania State University, Museum of Art
Princeton University, Art Museum

Rutgers University, Art Gallery

Smith College, Museum of Art

Syracuse University, Art Collections

Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City

LIST OF WORKS

1. BACON, Peggy
John Sloan's Lecture
etching, 9" x 11"
Delaware Art Museum; gift of Helen Farr Sloan
2. BACON, Peggy
A Simple Life (1954)
watercolor, 24" x 18½"
Syracuse University, Art Collections
3. BEAL, Gifford
Bareback Rider
oil on canvas, 18" x 36"
Private Collection
4. BELLOWS, George
Life Class
lithograph, 19" x 25½"
The Pennsylvania State University Museum of Art
5. BELLOWS, George
Summer Surf (1914)
oil on board, 18" x 22"
Delaware Art Museum, gift of the Friends of Art
6. BRUCE, Patrick Henry
Peinture/Nature Morte (Abstract) (1933)
oil on canvas, 35" x 46"
Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh;
gift of G. David Thompson, 1956

7.
CALDER, Alexander
Trapeze Artists
pen and ink, 0.55m x 0.76m
The Art Museum, Princeton University; gift of
Mrs. Harper, in memory of Raymond H. Harper
8.
CALDER, Alexander
Bric & Brac (1963)
gouache, 27" x 40"
Syracuse University, Art Collections
9.
COLEMAN, Glenn O.
Gloucester Harbor
oil on canvas, 34" x 25"
The Brooklyn Museum, gift of
Mr. and Mrs. Alan H. Temple
10.
DASBURG, Andrew
Poppies
oil on canvas, 40¼" x 26¼"
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution
11.
DAVIS, Stuart
Au Bon Coin (1928-29)
lithograph, 11¼" x 9½"
University of Delaware Gallery
12.
DAVIS, Stuart
Composition (1935)
oil on canvas, 22¼" x 30"
National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
(transfer from General Services Administration)
13.
DAVIS, Stuart
Gloucester Landscape (1918)
oil on canvas, 24" x 30"
Rutgers University Art Gallery,
New Brunswick, New Jersey
14.
DU BOIS, Guy Pene
Conversation
oil on board, 13⅝" x 9⅝"
Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, The Ella Gallup Sumner
and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection
15.
DU BOIS, Guy Pene
Yvonne (1930)
oil on canvas, 21½" x 17½"
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Altschul
16.
EVERGOOD, Philip
Canadian Gold Mine (1943)
oil on canvas, 25" x 30"
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University,
gift of Harry N. Abrams
17.
EVERGOOD, Philip
Rider on Pink Horse (ca. 1945)
oil on canvas, 16" x 12"
Everhart Museum of Natural History, Science and Art,
Scranton
18.
FRIEDMAN, Arnold
Blue River
oil on canvas, 24" x 30"
The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio
19.
GATCH, Lee
Pennsylvania Farm (1936)
oil on canvas, 14" x 36"
Delaware Art Museum, John L. Sexton bequest
20.
GOTTLIEB, Adolph
Mood (1969)
oil on canvas, 60" x 40"
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;
gift of the Artist, 1969 (69.150)
21.
GOTTLIEB, Adolph
Night Glow (1971)
aquatint, 34" x 26¼"
Delaware Art Museum, gift of Mrs. H. Rodney Sharp
22.
GOTTLIEB, Adolph
Seer (1947)
oil on masonite, 30" x 24"
The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio
23.
GROPPER, William
The Senate
lithograph, 14" x 18"
Delaware Art Museum, gift of Helen Farr Sloan
24.
HIRSCH, Joseph
Francis and Bird (1979)
oil on canvas, 27" x 19"
Private Collection
25.
HOPPER, Edward
Artist Seated at Easel (ca. 1903)
oil on canvas, 18" x 10"
The William Benton Museum of Art,
The University of Connecticut, Anonymous Donor
26.
HOPPER, Edward
The Cat Boat
etching, 8" x 10"
The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio
27.
KENT, Rockwell
Northern Light
woodcut, 5½" x 8⅞"
Delaware Art Museum, gift of Mrs. A. Ralph Snyder
28.
MARSH, Reginald
Coney Island Beach (1934)
etching, 13" x 10⅞"
Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania State University
29.
MARSH, Reginald
Lehigh Valley
watercolor, 14" x 20"
The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio
30.
MARSH, Reginald
Negress and White Girl in Subway (1938)
tempera on masonite, 24" x 18"
The William Benton Museum of Art,
The University of Connecticut, Anonymous Donor

31.
MORRIS, George L. K.
New Year's Eve (1945-46)
oil on canvas, 38" x 30½"
National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Given Anonymously

32.
MORRIS, George L. K.
Industrial Landscape (1936-50)
oil on canvas, 49½" x 63½"
National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Given Anonymously

33.
NEWMAN, Barnett
Black and White (1948)
black ink on paper, 24" x 16⅝"
Smith College Museum of Art,
Northampton, Massachusetts
Gift of Philip C. Johnson, 1952

34.
RAY, Man
Les Mains Libres: La Femme Portative (1936)
pen and ink, 0.38m x 0.28m
The Art Museum, Princeton University, purchased with the
Laura P. Hall Memorial Fund

35.
RAY, Man
Untitled (1915)
oil on board, 18½" x 12¼"
National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, gift of Flora E. H. Shawan

36.
RUSSELL, Morgan
Nu-Assis (ca. 1923-25)
oil on canvas, 28¾" x 21¾"
National Museum of American Art,
Smithsonian Institution, Museum Purchase

37.
RUSSELL, Morgan
Synchromy (1915-17)
oil on canvas, 12¾" x 10¾"
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution

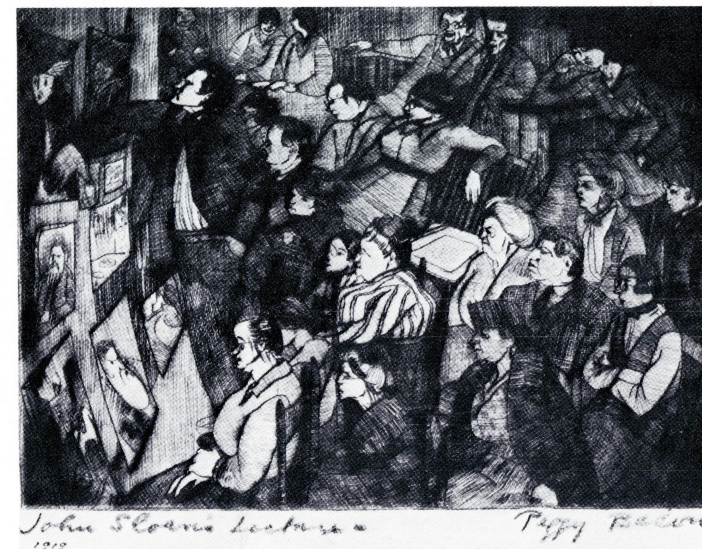
38.
SMITH, David
Untitled (1956)
oil and sand on canvas, 73⅞" x 11"
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution

39.
SOYER, Moses
Three Men (1974)
oil on canvas, 25" x 30"
Museum of Art, The Pennsylvania State University

40.
SPENCER, Niles
Above the Excavation #2 (1949)
oil on board, 12" x 16"
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University

41.
SPRINCHORN, Carl
Daisy Fields and Clouds, Shin Pond, Maine (1950)
oil on canvas, 21" x 29"
Private Collection

42.
SPENCER, Niles
The Bay (1937)
oil on canvas, 20" x 32"
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University



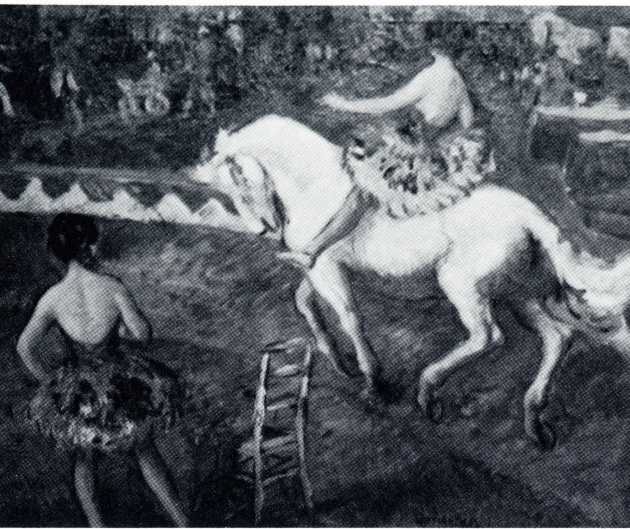
1.

THE ARTISTS

PEGGY BACON (1895-)

Born in Ridgefield, Connecticut, Bacon studied painting at the Art Students League from 1915 to 1920, under John Sloan, George Bellows, and Kenneth Hayes Miller. Self-taught as a printmaker she soon gained attention for her illustrated books. After traveling in Europe between 1920 and 1922, she returned to Woodstock, New York and a career of uninterrupted success as a painter, illustrator poet, and fiction writer. Her most famous work is a book of caricatures of famous contemporary personalities called *Off With Their Heads!* (1934)

Aside from her caricatures and other pictures of social satire, Bacon's work typically focused upon everyday life in the city. Her style exemplifies the kind of illustration which flourished under Sloan's influence: a brisk, energetic handling; dynamic compositions, and graphic vigor. Her sure use of tensive line may also be compared to the acerbic style of the great German satirist, George Grosz. In 1975, Bacon was given a major exhibition at the National Collection of Fine Arts.

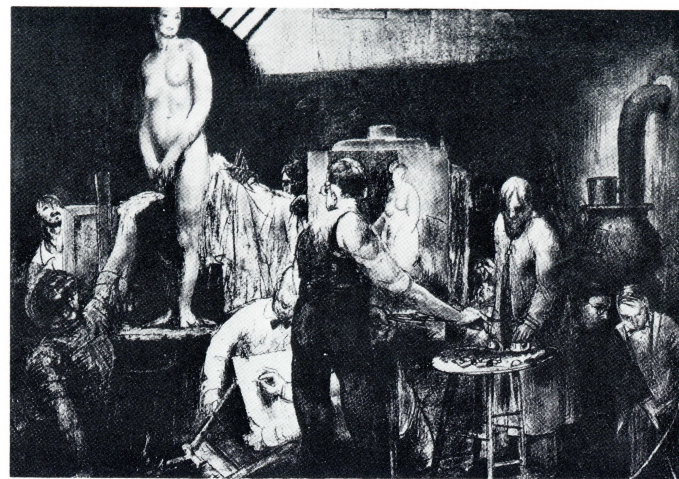


3.

GIFFORD BEAL (1879–1956)

A native of New York City, Beal graduated from Princeton University before going on to the Art Students' League, where he studied painting with Robert Henri, William Merritt Chase, and Frank DuMond. He joined the League's faculty and served as its president from 1914 to 1929. Like many painters of his generation, Beal executed commissions for the Federal Arts Project of the W.P.A. in the 1930's, including the mural in the Allentown, Pennsylvania post office.

Beal, like his contemporary and colleague George Bellows, produced a muscular romantic naturalism in his painting, but more often than Bellows, he found his inspiration in the rural landscape rather than the urban environment. He also produced dynamic genre subjects, such as the circus scene in this exhibition. This work employs the vibrant palette and rich surfaces of the Impressionists and Fauves, and clearly echoes Henri's straightforward and exuberant approach to the subject.

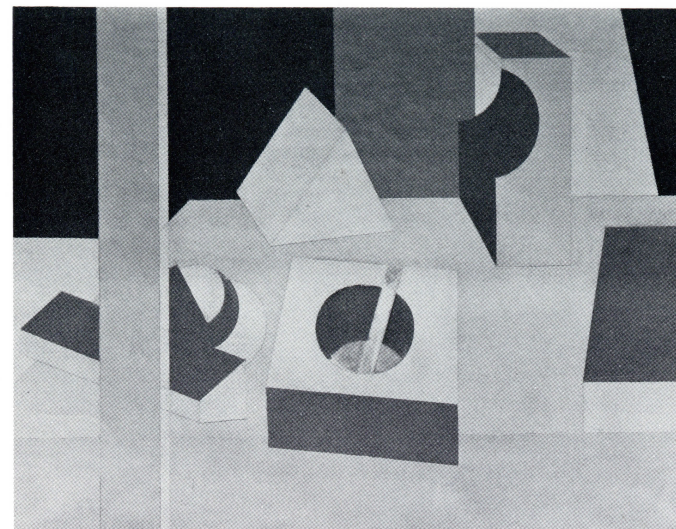


4.

GEORGE BELLOWS (1882–1925)

Bellows came from Columbus, Ohio. He studied with Henri from 1904–1906, and became the youngest associate of the National Academy of Design in 1908. He joined the faculty of the Art Students League in 1910. He became one of the organizers of the great Armory Show, and with Prendergast, Glackens, Duchamp and others, was one of the founders of the Society of Independent Artists in 1917. His early and continued success was brought to a premature end by a fatal attack of appendicitis.

Bellows was one of Henri's most faithful followers. Nevertheless, he fashioned a distinctive and powerful style. His early work was particularly fresh and exuberant, and included some of his most famous pictures, such as the prize fights and Hudson River views of the city. His style is often regarded as a paradigm of the American spirit in the early 20th century: brash, aggressive, optimistic, and indefatigable. In his last years, he turned to portraits, which were as sensitive as his earlier works were bold. Bellows' brisk, graphic style was also well-suited to the print medium, which he handled with consummate skill.



6.

PATRICK HENRY BRUCE (1881–1937)

A native of Virginia, Bruce studied in New York under Henri in 1902 and 1903. He went to Paris, where he studied with Matisse in 1907, and developed a Fauve-like style. By 1912, he had become interested in the more systematic color experiments of Robert Delaunay. Bruce exhibited in the Armory Show, and continued to be involved with European avant-garde movements during the war years. He evolved his unique manner of geometric still-life painting in the early twenties, which he refined over the next decade until he gave up painting in 1932. A man of sensitive and aristocratic spirit, Bruce could not accept the public disinterest in his work. He became increasingly withdrawn, and destroyed many of his paintings before returning to New York in 1937. He committed suicide shortly afterward.

Bruce has been rediscovered in recent years, particularly by Pop artists and *hard-edge* painters, and he is now regarded as one of the most important and original American artists of the early 20th century.



8.

ALEXANDER CALDER (1899–1976)

The son and grandson of eminent American sculptors, Calder came to his pursuit naturally. Born in Lawnton, Pennsylvania, he studied mechanical engineering at Stevens Institute before entering the Art Students League in 1923. There, he studied painting with Sloan until 1925. The following year, he went to Europe and began working in sculpture, initially doing small improvisations in wire and wood. His contact with the non-objective painter Mondrian in 1930 spurred his exploration of abstract form.

In 1931, with his creation of the *mobile*, Calder became the first American sculptor to stand among the world's foremost artistic innovators. One of the earliest kinetic sculptures, the *mobile* employed space and natural air movements, as well as boldly colored organic shapes. Calder's lyrical and playful *mobiles* and non-moving *stabiles* have become distinctive monuments throughout the world, amalgams of industrial technology and human poetry. Always an experimenter, Calder worked in all media. His prints echoed the forms of his sculptures, but took on an even greater sense of surrealist spontaneity.



10.

ANDREW DASBURG (1887-1979)

Dasburg was born in Paris, but his family moved to New York in 1892. He studied at the Art Students League under Robert Henri, as well as under Kenyon Cox and Frank DuMond. From 1909 to 1911, he resided in the city of his birth, where he came under the influence of the Cubists. He exhibited Cubist paintings in the Armory Show of 1913, and Synchronist works (see: Russell) in the Forum Exhibition of 1916. After these early major appearances, he rarely exhibited again, and eventually left New York to take up residence in Taos, New Mexico.

Although an early American participant in avant-garde movements of Europe, and highly regarded by the Modernists of his generation, Dasburg fell into relative obscurity until the late fifties. At that time, retrospectives of his work were held at the Dallas Museum (1957) and the American Federation of Arts (1959), and just before his death, Van Deren Coke completed a monograph on his life and art.

GLENN COLEMAN (1887-1932)

An Ohioan, Coleman arrived in New York City in 1905. He became a student of Henri, and remained one of the staunchest preservers of the *Ash-Can* style during the twenties. Like his predecessors in that style, he sought out the picturesque corners of the metropolis, and depicted them with straightforward naturalism. Though he lacked the bravura and vigor of a Sloan or a Bellows in these early works, he created honest, well-crafted pictures which revealed something of the tone of city life of that decade. Toward the end of his life and under the influence of Cubism, Coleman began to transmute his urban scenes into monumental stylizations of the city's architecture. The more personal vision was, unfortunately, cut short by his early death.

A sensitive and unaggressive man, Coleman received only sporadic public attention during his life. His friend Stuart Davis regarded him as one of the most gifted and unsung American artists of the twenties.



12.

STUART DAVIS (1894-1964)

Son of the art editor of the *Philadelphia Press* Davis was early associated with his father's co-workers, (and, later, members of The Eight), Sloan, Luks, Glackens and Shinn. He left school at 16, and went to New York to study with Henri. Between 1913 and 1916, he worked chiefly as an illustrator for *The Masses* and *Harper's Weekly*. His taste for the more avant-garde styles of the day developed out of the Armory Show, and soon led him to a front-line position in the American vanguard. His liberal sympathies brought him editorship of the *Art Front*, a publication of the Artists' Union, in 1935.

Davis created one of the most original variants on Cubism, one which has been called characteristically American in its bold simplicity, brash color, and pre-Pop imagery. His fondness for jazz combined with his enjoyment of the urban pace to produce the highly staccato pictorial structure found in much of his work. His W.P.A. murals, such as the famous one in Radio City Music Hall, helped to broaden his reputation, but even without these, Davis would stand among the major painters of the twentieth century. His late works brought him close to a younger generation of Pop, Hard-Edge, and Color-Field painters.



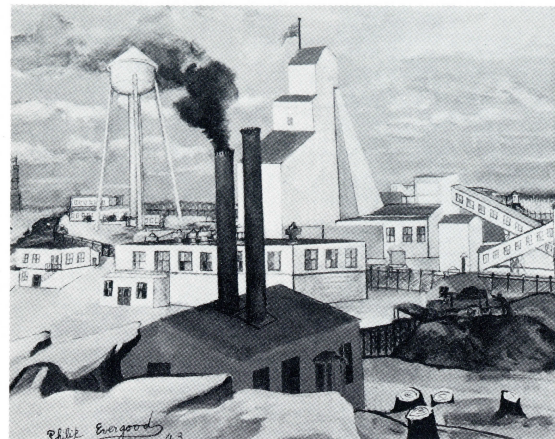
15.

GUY PENE DU BOIS (1884-1958)

Born in New York City, du Bois studied under Henri, Chase, DuMond, and Miller. An uneven and intermittent painter, du Bois reached his artistic peak in the twenties with a series of satirical paintings aimed at the self-indulgent lifestyle of the wealthy bourgeoisie. An odd mixture of classical simplicity, Art Deco stylization, and decadent mood gave his art a "Weimar" atmosphere quite compatible with that era.

Of French extraction, du Bois spent the years 1924-1930 in France, where he took a deep interest in French culture and tradition. He was especially fond of the monumental style and caricature of Daumier. In the 1930s du Bois' style mellowed and the satire waned, but his art always remained distinctive. He was also a prolific writer on art, and worked as an art critic for several major newspapers and journals.

His reputation over the past few decades has been ambiguous, but the Corcoran Museum's retrospective of his work this spring will undoubtedly provide us with a fresh perspective of du Bois and his place in American art.



16.

PHILIP EVERGOOD (1901-1973)

Evergood was born in New York City, and studied at the Art Students League under George Luks in 1923. He had already taken a diploma in drawing from London's Slade School of Art, but Luks urged him to become a painter. An admirer of Sloan's work, Evergood became a close friend of Sloan, who spurred his interest in human themes. During the Depression, he concentrated on social and political subjects, and was involved in several artists' activist groups, such as the Artist's Union. During the period of the W.P.A. art projects, Evergood was supervisor of the easel painting division for New York.

Later in his career, he turned to more personal and spiritual themes, and became increasingly experimentive with the painting medium, so much so that his style shows considerable variation over the years. A difficult painter to classify, Evergood used elements of expressionism, surrealism, and cubism as the theme demanded. But his use of these elements was never academic. It was part of his ceaseless search for the appropriate impassioned image. Beneath the modernist veneer, one often felt the presence of the folklore and mysticism of his Russian heritage.



18.

ARNOLD FRIEDMAN (1874-1946)

Born into a poor immigrant family in New York City, Friedman started work at an early age, and, reminded of the poverty of his youth, remained employed by the postal service until his retirement in 1933. He began his art studies in 1905 at the Art Students League, under Henri who aroused his enthusiasm for painting. He got to Paris for several months in 1908, where he took a strong interest in Seurat's divisionist color techniques. Following the Armory Show, he began to work abstractly, in a style close to Russell's Synchronism.

Friedman's commitment to abstraction was never total, and he returned to a figurative mode by 1920. Although he had joined with colleagues such as Bellows, Hopper, and Coleman in early progressive art activities, he became increasingly isolated in the twenties. His full-time postal job left little time for painting and professional involvements. Only after his retirement could he return to a steady regimen of painting.

Friedman is an interesting example of an early modernist whose great potential was mitigated by external concerns. Nevertheless, he did develop a highly personal, if incompletely formed style.



19.

LEE GATCH (1902-1968)

Lee Gatch grew up in the Baltimore area, and studied art at the Maryland Institute during the time that John Sloan was a visiting professor there. He also studied with Leon Kroll, and, in Paris, with Andre Lhote. During the thirties, Gatch was strongly influenced by Impressionism and Cubism, but his work proceeded basically upon an expressionistic course, developing into a resonant personal style. He developed an intense and almost mystical attachment to nature, and incorporated its colors, forms, and textures into his often abstract patterns. He even attached real stones to some of his later canvases. After 1935, he lived a rather reclusive life in rural New Jersey. His highly methodical and experimentive approach to the medium limited his output, but he remained a highly respected painter in the forties and fifties. He was given a major show by the Whitney Museum in 1960.



21.

ADOLPH GOTTLIEB (1903-1974)

A native New Yorker, Gottlieb studied at the Art Students League under both Henri and Sloan. He also studied in Paris, Berlin, and Munich during the 1920s. His development as an artist largely paralleled the major trends of his day. In the thirties his work dealt with the American scene and social realism. By 1940, he was immersed in a more personal magic realism, akin to surrealism. During the forties, this personal approach developed into a symbolic and atavistic pictography, not unlike Miro's in concept, but quite unique in style.

Gottlieb gradually simplified his pictographic imagery into the spare, but explosive "Burst" paintings of the fifties. These pictures, contrasting a chaotic form with an holistic one, became his trademark, and took their place among the most vital and individual statements of the Abstract Expressionists. Indeed, his style stood between the florid spontaneity of Pollock and DeKooning and the austere colorism of Rothko and Newman.



24.

WILLIAM GROPPER (1897–1977)

Gropper was the son of a poor New York garment worker. He dropped out of school in order to help support the family, but his intense interest and aptitude in art led him to take courses at the Ferrer School in 1912-13, where he studied under Henri and Bellows. In 1919, he became a political cartoonist for the *New York Tribune* and remained active as a cartoonist through the twenties. He began serious painting in 1921.

Gropper's outspoken support of radical social reforms brought him an invitation from writers Theodore Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis to accompany them on their tour of Russia in 1927. Social and political themes in an expressionistic style, reminiscent of Daumier and George Grosz, dominated his work in the thirties, and made him one of the most abrasive and effective pictorial satirists of the day. *The Senate*, the lithograph shown here, is typical of this style.

JOSEPH HIRSCH (1910–)

At 71, the last-born painter in the exhibition, Hirsch continues to work in the realist tradition of his mentor George Luks. Born in Philadelphia he received his first art training at the Pennsylvania Museum School before moving on to New York City and Luks' school.

Hirsch's great facility won him critical attention very early in his student years, and his career has flourished without interruption since then. Although his realism is readily accessible to a wide public, Hirsch typically endows it with a subtle strangeness bordering on the surreal. His subjects cover a broad range, but invariably they contain humanity, either in situations involving political or social issues, or in single figures or groups caught in enigmatic moods or relationships. His technique as a realist tends to be more painterly than photographic, well within the tradition of The Eight. Hirsch is also well known for his drawings and prints.



25.

EDWARD HOPPER (1882–1967)

Born in Nyack, New York, Hopper studied under Henri at the New York School of Art from 1900 to 1906. After a visit to Paris, he returned to New York and made his living as a graphic artist between 1915 and 1923. Recognition came slowly, but by the early thirties, he had achieved a solid reputation as a painter. In 1933, the Museum of Modern Art mounted his first retrospective.

Although allied with the American Scene (or Regionalist) movement, Hopper's paintings transcended specific regional themes and images. His deserted rural roadsides were identical in mood and style to his deserted urban hotels. Almost always, they involved a spirit of solitude and waiting, within a simple place. A strong sense of pattern and structure gave his austere realism an almost abstract monumentality which appealed to modernists as well as traditionalists. Hopper's reputation has continued to grow since his death, and the Whitney Museum's major retrospective of 1980 (now traveling to Europe)* has only underscored Hopper's position as one of America's most important and revered artists.

**Because of the comprehensiveness of the Whitney show, we were unable to obtain a characteristic painting by Hopper.*

ROCKWELL KENT (1882–1971)

Kent was born in Tarrytown, New York. He studied with Henri, as well as with Chase, Miller, and Thayer. He is better known as an illustrator and printmaker than as a painter, and is particularly revered for his wood engravings. Despite occasional flirtations with modernist styles, he remained throughout most of his career a conservative artist, a preserver of heroic romanticism as manifested in the ruggedness and grandeur of the American landscape. His best work was bold and direct in concept, clean and spare in design. His lesser work always maintained an appealing decorativeness, often reminiscent of Art Deco design.

Kent was an avid supporter of radical social and political movements (he was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize in Moscow in 1967), and used his art to communicate readily understood images of noble humanity and epic nature. His utopian vision remained curiously detached from the nitty-gritty spirit of the Ash-Can school, however.

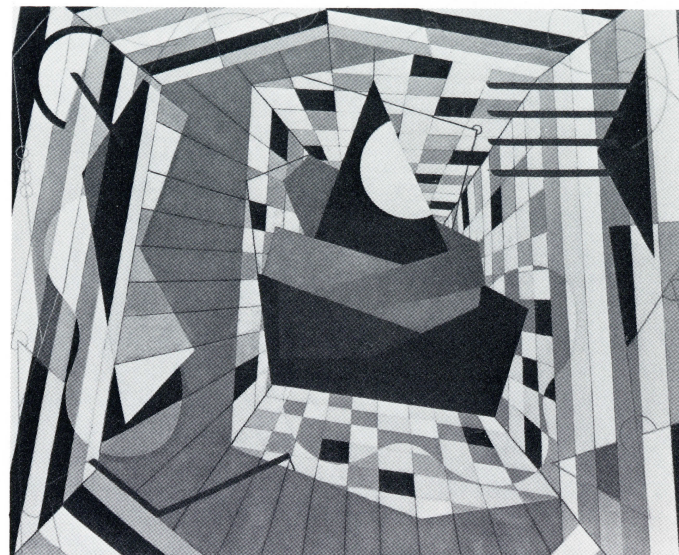


28.

REGINALD MARSH (1898–1954)

Marsh was born in Paris of American parents and grew up in New Jersey. As art editor of the *Yale Record*, then staff artist for *Vanity Fair* and the *New York Daily News*, Marsh had developed a pungent naturalistic style even before he entered the Art Students League in 1926 to study with Sloan, Luks, and Miller.

Marsh's concern for the common man, which also revealed itself in radical political sympathies, was manifested in an art filled with images of the working classes and their urban environment. Street scenes, subway cars, and Coney Island crowds were typical themes. He was a fine and facile draftsman and printmaker, and, in painting, he preferred tempera and watercolor, which suited small-scale illustration and spontaneity. His stylized and animated realism became readily identifiable, and made him an urban counterpart to the rural regionalist painters. Marsh stands as one of the most prolific and bouyant interpreters of American life in the twenties and thirties.

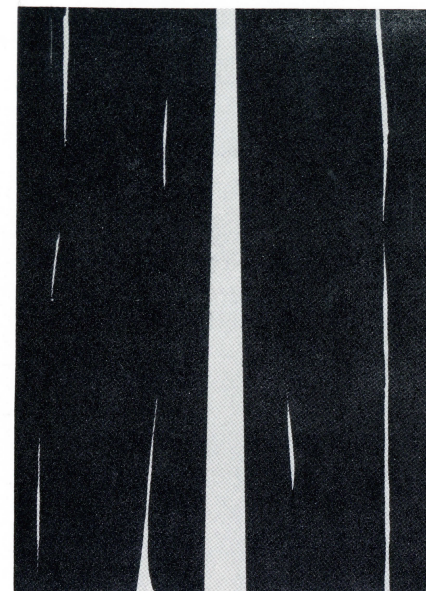


32.

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS (1905–1975)

A native of New York City, Morris attended Yale University before entering the Art Students League, where he worked under Sloan and Miller. His radical artistic spirit took him to Paris for further study with Leger and Ozenfant, as well as an intimate association with the continental avant-garde of the thirties. He edited two important modernist art journals in Paris, *The Miscellany* (1929-31) and *Plastique* (1937-39). With the outbreak of World War II, he returned to America permanently, and joined the faculty of the League in 1943-44.

Although Morris himself was not among the major artistic innovators of his day, he was an important spokesman and catalyst for the modernist cause, and played a significant role in America's assimilation of European trends prior to the war. He was one of the founders of the American Abstract Artists in 1936, (and its president from 1948 to 1950), in which capacity he helped prepare the ground for the revolutionary developments in American art which followed the war.

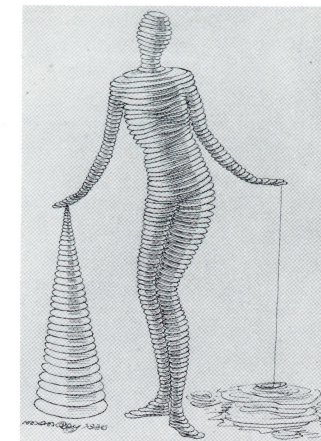


33.

BARNETT NEWMAN (1905–1970)

Newman, like G.L.K. Morris, was born in New York City in 1905 and studied under Sloan at the League, which he attended from 1922 to 1927. But, unlike Morris, Newman's immediate course was not into the avant-garde mainstream. He worked in his father's garment business from 1927 to 1937, and occasionally taught art in high school before he turned to a full-time career as an artist.

Under the influence of Surrealism, Newman experimented with "automatic" drawings in 1944, and began a series of "cosmic landscapes" in 1945. He became associated with the first Abstract Expressionists, such as Gottlieb, Rothko, and Motherwell, and soon became one of their most articulate spokesmen. His austere and mystical "stripe" paintings began in 1948, and were founded upon spiritual themes such as the creation. Newman's canvases grew increasingly large, spare, and flat, and profoundly influenced the Color-Field and Minimalist painters of the sixties and seventies.



34.

MAN RAY (1890–)

Man Ray studied architecture and engineering in his native Philadelphia before devoting himself to art. He was a student of Henri, and by 1911 already showed an interest in the more radical trends of the day. After the Armory Show, he began working in a Cubist and Futurist manner. In 1915, he met Marcel Duchamp and became part of that artist's inner circle, along with Francis Picabia, the collector Walter Arensburg, and the photographer-dealer, Alfred Stieglitz.

In this company, Ray became one of the premier practitioners of Dada, that radical international movement spawned by World War I and given over to ridicule of all conventionality. His wit and irony, blended with great inventiveness, gave Ray's art its variously humorous, outrageous, and enigmatic character. He worked in all media, and became especially famous for his *rayographs* (images of objects exposed directly on film without a camera) and his Dada objects.

Except for the 1940s, Ray has spent most of his career in Paris, and has taken his place among the major modernists. With his friend Duchamp, Ray has been an important progenitor of recent neo-Dada and Conceptual art.



36.

MORGAN RUSSELL (1886–1953)

Russell was born in New York, and studied with Henri before going to Paris in 1909. There he came under the influence of Matisse, the Cubists, and the Futurists. In 1913, with his fellow American Stanton Macdonald-Wright, he founded the movement called Synchronism, which was based upon the dynamic use of color in abstract compositions. This movement paralleled the contemporary colorism of the French painter Delaunay, but remained entirely distinctive. Russell thus became one of the first Americans to make a significant contribution to modern art at the international level. He brought his synchronist work to America for the Forum Exhibition of 1916, but its influence here was only modest.

Like many other radical artists of his generation, including Picasso and Matisse, Russell returned to a figurative style in the twenties. The two works in the exhibition show his avant-garde style of the teens (represented by one of his small works of that period) and his more traditional manner of the twenties.

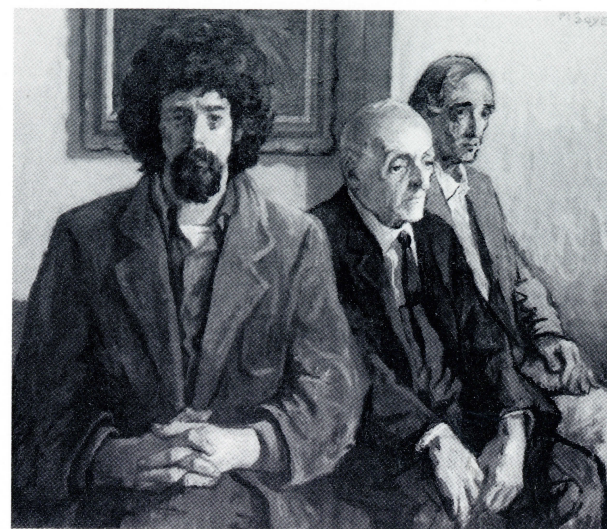
DAVID SMITH (1906–1965)

Smith was a native of Decatur, Indiana, and attended colleges in the mid-west and Washington, D.C. before moving to New York in 1926. He studied painting at the League with Sloan and with Jan Matulka, and became a close friend of Stuart Davis. After his painting became increasingly three-dimensional in character, he turned to sculpture in the early thirties. In 1933, inspired by Julio Gonzalez, he began doing welded constructions utilizing scrap iron. Cubist, Constructivist, and Surrealist influences predominated at first.

Having worked as a riveter in an auto plant, Smith came naturally to the industrial "heavy metal" work which has become so influential on later sculptors. During the forties and fifties, Smith created spontaneous "drawings in space," comparable to Abstract Expressionist painting. In the late fifties, he turned to thin, vertical *totems* (which he also rendered in paintings, such as the one shown here). His last phase, evolving in the sixties, included his "Cubi" series, dynamic clusters of metal boxes. Smith stands with Calder as one of the most important and influential sculptors of the twentieth century.



38.

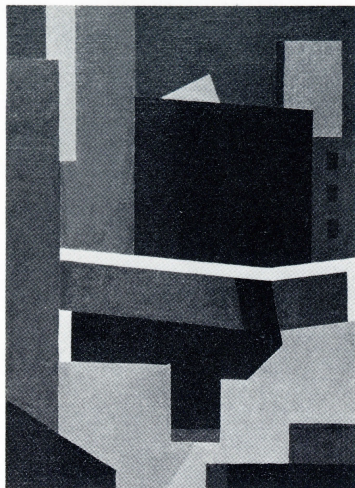


39.

MOSES SOYER (1899–1974)

Soyer came to New York City from his native Russia in 1913. With his artist brothers Raphael and Isaac, he was one of the most durable presences in American art. A student of Henri at the Ferrer School, he sustained an honest and sensitive version of the Ash-Can tradition long after its heyday. In the 1920s, he joined Kenneth Hayes Miller's 14th Street School, and participated in that group's Ash-Can revival.

Sloan and Degas were among the major influences on Soyer, and he shared with them a strong feeling for humanity closely and spontaneously observed. His portraits and genre pictures are rendered with a simple, atmospheric realism which also embodies subtle moods and, often, classical structures. The work in this exhibition was one of his last paintings, and reveals these aspects of his style very well.



40.

NILES SPENCER (1893–1952)

Spencer attended the Rhode Island School of Design in his native state before moving to New York City. At the Ferrer School, he studied with Henri and Bellows. Like Glenn Coleman, Spencer was especially fond of the architectural scene of the city, and went even farther in translating it into a Cubist image. Spencer's modernist vision was at first characterized by a static, cubist simplicity, virtually devoid of living things. Later, the blocky forms were flattened into juxtaposed planes suggestive of the austere works of Juan Gris and Stuart Davis. These simple but carefully organized paintings took on a quiet energy and sophistication of design often lacking in the earlier works. (Both phases are exhibited here).

Spencer was especially fascinated by industrial scenes, to which his style was well suited. He joined other American industrial painters, such as Charles Sheeler, Charles Demuth, and Ralston Crawford in this respect, as well as in his rather precisionist aesthetic.



41.

CARL SPRINCHORN (1887–1971)

A native of Sweden, Sprinchorn came to the United States in 1903 with the intention of studying art with Robert Henri, whose reputation had become widespread. He worked with Henri until 1910, and managed that artist's school for several years. He participated in the Armory Show of 1913. In the twenties, he directed the New Gallery which promoted young American and French modernists, but for much of his life, he traveled widely in this country and abroad.

Seeking inspiration in nature, Sprinchorn developed a vigorous, expressionist style, well-exemplified in the work displayed here. Like his friends Marsden Hartley and Rockwell Kent, he had a special fondness for the rugged landscape and outdoor life of Maine. Boldly sketched loggers and fisherman often inhabited his dynamic and rough-hewn landscapes. Though he resided in America for most of his adult life, Sprinchorn's art bears a powerful Nordic stamp. The influences of Edvard Munch, the German Expressionists, and Scandinavian legend and poetry are all apparent, but from these, Sprinchorn fashioned a distinctive and vital style.

SORDONI ART GALLERY OF WILKES COLLEGE

Director
WILLIAM STERLING

Coordinator
CARA BERRYMAN

Advisory Commission
Albert Margolies, Chairman
Robert S. Capin
Aleta Connell
Patricia Davies
Juliette Epstein
Richard Fuller
Thomas Kelly
Shirley Klein
Sue Kluger
Paul Mailloux
Marilyn Maslow
Robert Ott
Sandy Rifkin
Jill Saporito
Helen Sloan
Andrew Sordoni, III

WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA 18766

