

AMERICAN PAINTINGS
OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

From the Collection of
MR. *and* MRS. NORMAN B. WOOLWORTH

CATALOGUE

BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
Walker Art Building Brunswick, Maine

JANUARY 29TH TO FEBRUARY 28TH, 1961

C. T. M. — Feb 27

The Bowdoin College Museum is privileged to share with students and friends a selection of paintings from the distinguished collection of American art assembled during the past six years by Mr. and Mrs. Norman B. Woolworth of Winthrop, Maine and New York City. We are most grateful for their enthusiastic interest in the art of our country, and for their generosity in lending their pictures to us.

Paintings are somewhat like people – generally a mixture of perfections and imperfections. The distinction of a fine personal collection often lies in the profound understanding of the collectors that Quality in art is a sum of qualities; the discriminating recognize individual excellences within a period, a genre, an oeuvre, or in a single picture. Sensitivity to unique and separate sorts of vision, color, design, brushwork, and so on, is particularly necessary for a vivid response to American art. Our pictorial legacy comprehends so diverse a group of points of view, such varied amounts of technical training, such wide-ranging geographic, economic and cultural situations that perceptive flexibility is a *sine qua non* of intelligent appreciation. The Woolworth collection displays this sensitivity and flexibility and thereby provides for the visitor a true cross-section of the extraordinarily rich fruits of nineteenth and early twentieth century American painting.

This show suggests, for example, the course of landscape painting in America. It includes a fine work by Joshua Shaw, the English artist whose 1830 exhibition in Philadelphia marked the coming of age of landscape painting in this country. Somewhat dry and precisely handled, it demonstrates the degree to which a man trained in the rhetorical European tradition (William Dunlap, the chronicler of early American art and artists, writes in his diary of Shaw as a ‘conceited English blockhead’), could adapt himself to the American taste for specificity and clarity. From this

beginning we may watch the development of native landscapists who, in our own great West (Bierstadt, Moran), and in more exotic parts of the New World (Church), transformed an inherently wild nature into visions of romantic grandeur; while in New England Kensett, FitzHugh Lane, and Martin Johnson Heade infused literally rendered scenes with a cautious affection. Concurrently, and again well-illustrated here, there emerged a characteristic American genre painting in which increasingly men are properly and fully engaged in and by the vast land (Durrie, Bingham), or simply enjoying an un-European freshness of nature (Johnson, Homer).

The varied interests of Americans are revealed by Russell's study of Indians hunting buffalo, part of the scientific recording of this dying society for which George Catlin is perhaps better known. The long concern of our fathers with portraits – records of individual personalities – is illustrated by Rembrandt Peale's extraordinary painting of his brother; and the shifting influences of European styles on American artists is demonstrated by Sargent's fluid study, and Mary Cassatt's Degas-touched "Portrait of Mrs. Harrison". The impact of Impressionism on this country may be seen in Childe Hassam's pastel and Gari Melchers' "Breakfast Table": American devotion to the tangible is displayed by James Peale's still life, and later by George Hall's "Grapes." The fascination of obscuring the dividing line between picture and reality in Peto and Harnett is revealed in Haberle with the humor of a visual joke.

In the high quality of these paintings, their concern with craftsmanship, their animation and variety, we are permitted to retrieve something of the wonderful excitement of the burgeoning new nation on whose achievements our own generation rests.

Carl N. Schmalz, Jr.

CATALOGUE

William Harnett	Still Life with Pipe, 1890.
John F. Kensett	Coast Scene, 1872.
Winslow Homer	Reveille, 1865.
Winslow Homer	Nursemaid, 1867.
Winslow Homer	<u>The Unruly Calf</u> , 1875.
Winslow Homer	Boys in Dory, 1893.
Gari Melchers	The Breakfast Table.
C. M. Russell	When Meat was Plentiful, 1902.
Worthington Whitteridge	Seascape.
Eastman Johnson	Figures in a Pasture.
Martin Heade	Hayricks.
Martin Heade	Hibiscus.
Joshua Shaw	New England Scene.
John Haberle	Package from Haberle.
Thomas Moran	Giant Blue Spring, 1873.
John LaFarge	Waterlillies.
Childe Hassam	Lannion, 1900.
James Peale, Sr.	Still-Life with Melon, "To Maria".
Rembrandt Peale	<u>Rubens Peale with the First Geranium Plant Brought to America</u> , 1801.

George Caleb Bingham	Raftsmen by Night.
Alfred Bierstadt	Deer Crossing.
FitzHugh Lane	Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1856.
George Henry Hall	Grapes, 1874.
George H. Durrie	Wood for Christmas, 1855.
Ralph Albert Blakelock	Sunset.
William Sydney Mount	Artist Painting.
John F. Peto	Arnold Ink-Well, 1899.
John William Casilear	New England Beach Scene.
Frederick Edwin Church	Canadian Scene, 1866.
Alfred Jacob Miller	Sioux Indians Reconnoitering.
George Fuller	J. C. Calhoun, Politician, Philosopher, Traveller.
Thomas Doughty	Hudson River Highlands, 1836.
Louis Michel Elshemius (or Elshemus)	Evening Star.
George Cope	The Days Bag, 1910.
John Singer Sargent	Carolus Durand.
George Luks	Child with Red Ball.
Eugene Speicher	<u>Flowers.</u>
Mary Cassatt	<u>Mrs. Harrison.</u>

Paintings, Drawings and Sculptures from the Permanent Collection are on view in the Bowdoin and Walker Galleries.

The Classical Collection is on view in the Basement.

The Bowdoin College Museum of Fine Art, in the Walker Art Building, is open Weekdays from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 to 4 p.m.
Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m.

Summer Schedule: Weekdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 6 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.
(July and August) Sundays, 2 to 5 p.m.