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Elvehjem Museum of Art

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The Elvehjem Museum of Art *artscene*

University of
Wisconsin-Madison
Volume 2, Number 4

New at the Elvehjem is a bronze Etruscan handmirror, probably dating to the late fourth century, B.C. According to Richard De Puma, Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Iowa and a leading expert in this field, "One of the most distinctive products of the ancient Etruscan culture is the engraved bronze handmirror. These luxury articles were manufactured by Etruscan artisans from ca. 530 B.C. to as late as ca. 100 B.C. Almost all examples have been found in Etruscan tombs and are associated with female burials. More than 3,000 examples survive and each year's excavations bring new ones to light.

"Most Etruscan mirrors are circular bronze discs with a brightly polished reflecting side which is slightly convex and thus gives a wider than normal field of view. The non-reflecting, concave side is

frequently engraved with a variety of subjects illustrating various aspects of Etruscan religious belief and everyday life. It is this decoration that makes these handsome objects such important documents for our understanding of Etruscan culture.

"The Elvehjem mirror is an excellent example of a type of Etruscan tang mirror. The bone or ivory handle into which the tang once fit is no longer preserved. The beautifully engraved figures represent a Dionysiac scene with a dancing satyr on the left and an accompanying maenad at the center. On the right side, balancing the satyr, is a nude, winged female. She, like the maenad, wears very elaborate jewelry, but boots instead of sandals. This figure is almost certainly a 'Lasa,' one of a group of supernatural spirits or godlings who frequently appear on Etruscan mirrors."

Etruscan, *Handmirror*, ca. late 4th century B.C., Earl O. Vits Endowment

and Friends of the Elvehjem Museum of Art Funds purchase



JULY/AUGUST

Exhibitions

Main Streets in Dane County
Selections from the Gunther Heller Print Collection
Madison Views:
Recent Works by the Madison Watercolor Society
Dianne Blell Photographs:
Modern Dreams of Ancient Times

Artwork of the Month

Randolph Rogers, *Indian Hunter Boy*
Jim Dine, *Nine Views of Winter #1*

Lectures

Sunday Talks on Artwork of the Month

Tours

Thursday Drop-In Tours at 11 a.m.

NEW AT THE ELVEHJEM

Artworks of the Month

The Artwork of the Month for July is Randolph Rogers' *Indian Hunter Boy* of 1866–67, given to the Museum in memory of Professor Harry Hayden Clark by Charles L. Leavitt. Though this sculpture has been in the Elvehjem's collection since 1972, it has not been on view in recent years. However, it is the subject of a significant essay entitled *Randolph Rogers' Indian Hunter Boy: Allegory of Innocence*, by Assistant Professor Vivien Green Fryd of Vanderbilt University, published recently in our *Bulletin* for 1984/1985.

Rogers' Neoclassical sculpture of a chubby child, executed in flawless white Carrara marble combines two popular nineteenth-century themes: the Indian and the child. Attitudes toward children changed in the nineteenth century when youngsters were beginning to be seen as something other than miniature adults. Both child and Indian were somehow beyond the pale of white adult civilization. However, white Ameri-

cans believed that while Indians existed permanently outside civilization, white infants eventually entered society through education. Two other common nineteenth-century stereotypical motifs apply to this sculpture: the image of the latent savage or bad boy (e.g. Huck Finn), evident in the self-reliant pose of this infant hunter, and the contrasting image of the saintly child, emphasized by the pure whiteness of the marble.

Rogers' image is typical of the sort of Neoclassical sculpture created by his generation of American artists, many of whom had spent time in Rome. The clear contours and smooth, soft surfaces of the figure contrast with the more detailed and rougher textures of the tree-stump, bird, animal skin, feathers, and hair. The doughlike qualities of the flesh and his squat proportions emphasize the pudginess of the child's little body. The life-size but diminutive hunter stands in a classical contrapposto pose on a round base inscribed "Randolph Rogers, Rome." On his nude body the hunter carries the tools necessary for a good hunt and his hair is adorned with a duck's feathers, appropriate trophies of a child's successful venture.

The Artwork of the Month for August is *Nine Views of Winter #1* by Jim Dine, a large (52½ × 37 inches) color woodcut produced in 1985. Purchased through the Edward Rolke Farber Fund, this print was previously announced and illustrated in *Artscene* for September–October, 1985, as a recent acquisition.

Jim Dine rose to prominence during the heyday of Pop Art in the mid-1960s as one of the most accomplished printmakers of that generation of artists. He is best known for his work in intaglio and for taking common objects, especially tools (paint brushes, hammers, etc.), and elevating them as cultural icons. In *Nine Views of Winter* he has in one way reversed this by taking a pre-established cultural icon—the Venus de Milo statue—as his image, and yet in another way the headless and armless figure presented here does bear an affinity to what is perhaps Dine's central image, the empty bathrobe.



Randolph Rogers, *Indian Hunter Boy*, 1866/67, marble, Gift in Memory of Professor Harry Hayden Clark by Charles L. Leavitt



Jim Dine, *Nine views of Winter #1*, 1985, woodcut with handwork, Edward Rolke Farber Fund purchase

In the past decade, Dine's work has taken on a more expressionist character. Since 1977 he has also worked increasingly in the woodcut medium. Although the woodcut has played a limited role in the art of printmaking during the past half century, it is well suited for large-scale works since it can be hand-printed; it also lends itself to broadly conceived design and loose, expressive execution such as one finds in *Nine Views of Winter*. Thus, as an example both of Dine's most recent direction and of the contemporary woodcut, this print is an important addition to the Elvehjem's collection of prints and drawings.

Nine Views of Winter is actually a suite of nine prints, all using the same key-block but with different color combinations. The nine views, or states, were printed in an edition of twenty-four impressions, each of which was subsequently hand worked by Dine, giving every print a certain uniqueness despite the fact that it is a multiple. *View #1* is predominantly blue in tonality, the foliated background being overlaid by striations of white pigment.

The Elvehjem

From the Director

Summer, a period of diminished activity on a university campus, gives us space to reflect on the Museum's progress and look constructively to the future. Long-term plans which are essential to any institution's stability are not produced by fanciful flights of the imagination but are shaped by the realities facing it. Let me share with you some of our thoughts in three different areas: expanding our ability to purchase new works of art, evaluating the Museum's space requirements, and reassessing its curatorial and scholarly activities.

Building and maintaining a high quality and historically significant collection is one of a museum's most important activities. If money were no object, adding to the collection would be a relatively simple matter. However, given the high prices that fine works of art command and given the relatively modest buying power of the Elvehjem's purse, the matter becomes decidedly more complex. Since the reduction of standards is not an acceptable option, the question of adding to the collection must be approached from two directions: on the one hand, the funds currently available must be spent to the best long-term advantage, on the other, the amount of money available annually has to be increased given the realities of the art market. Although one frequently hears about works of art selling for prices well over \$1 million, extraordinarily fine and historically valid works of art can be had for between \$150,000 to \$750,000. Therefore, a goal for the Elvehjem would be to build an art purchase endowment which would allow the Museum to acquire one or more works of art in this range each year. In the meantime, the Museum can spend its available purchase funds to best advantage in areas such as contemporary art which, because the artists are still living, is considered a less secure "investment," and therefore commands significantly lower prices. Also, work currently out of fashion, although not inexpensive, commands less inflated prices but still challenges our interest. In fact, this sort of opportunity has to a great extent dictated the Elvehjem's purchasing practices during the past two years.

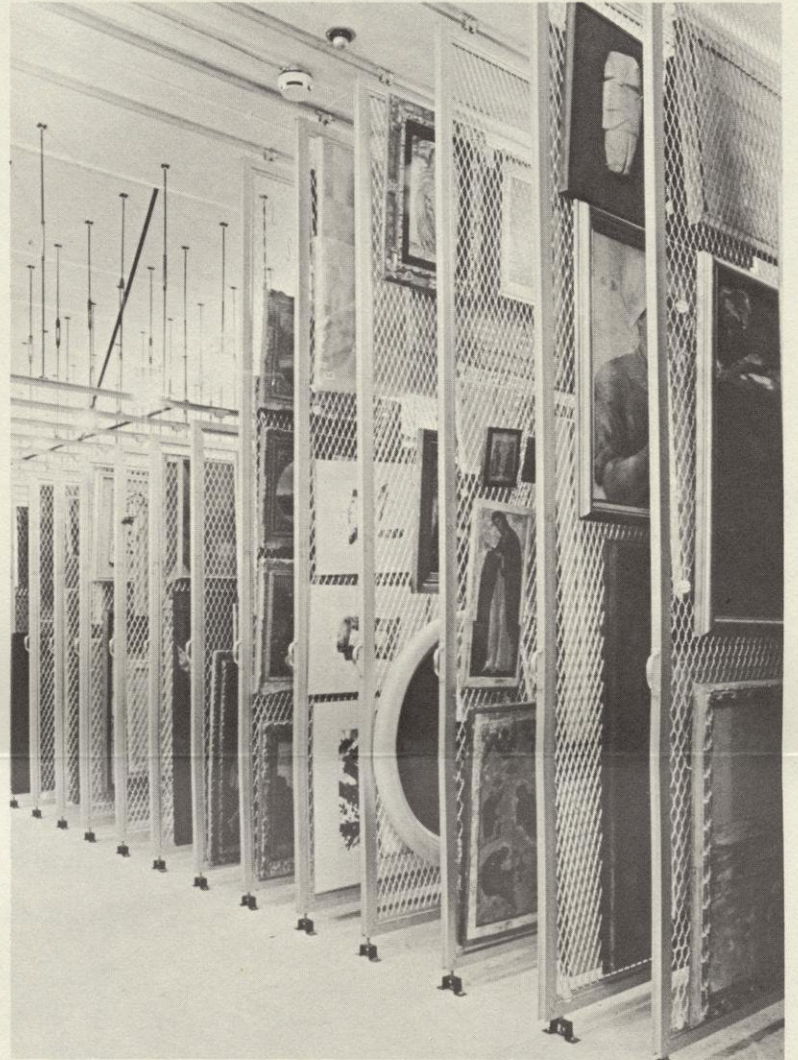
Building a collection, something which any self-respecting museum must do, carries with it the responsibility of maintaining, preserving and exhibiting the works of art. At present, the Elvehjem owns and cares for over 13,500 objects. Each year, either through gift or purchase, between 500 and 750 new works are added to the collection. By the year 2,000, we estimate that the collection will number somewhere between 20,000 and 25,000 works of art. At this moment, the Museum's galleries are filled to capacity, Museum painting storage areas are filled to 80% capacity, sculpture and decorative arts areas are filled to 90%, while for prints, drawings and other works on paper the space is filled to 15-20% over capacity. Given the projected growth rate of the collection, the current excess storage will be used up within two to three years. A limited amount of reorganization of Museum storage areas is possible and is, in fact, currently underway. This reorganization, combined with higher aesthetic criteria in acquiring art such as furniture which necessitates a greater spatial commitment on the part of the Elvehjem and a program of sharing our collections with other museums, can stretch the capacity of the current storage to up to five years. It is obvious that, within the next half decade, the Elvehjem will be facing a serious space crunch.

With the continuing expansion of the collection, the basic task of keeping track of it becomes more complex. Each work of art must be properly identified and catalogued. Computerization of Museum records is already part of the Elvehjem's long-range plan. A search is presently underway for computer programs that other museums have successfully used on collection management, and we are looking for consultants who will be able to design a program specifically suited to the Elvehjem's needs.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Elvehjem intends in the near future to intensify its educational and scholarly role. Every label that is affixed to a work of art on exhibition in the Museum's galleries has to be authoritative, reflecting the most recent scholarship. Every exhibition is designed to introduce a new

facet of scholarship or a new interpretation of a selection of works of art or of a group of artists. Publications such as the Elvehjem's *Bulletin* and catalogues of portions of the collection also must present updated scholarly materials pertaining to the Museum's collections and research activities. None of these goals can be achieved without increased scholarly and curatorial output from the Museum staff and increased cooperation between the Museum and the University faculty.

Russell Panczenko



A portion of the Elvehjem's painting storage area

The Elvehjem

EXHIBITIONS

Gunther Heller Print Collection and Watercolor Views of Madison

The Elvehjem has recently received a collection of prints from Gunther W. Heller. A teacher, a counselor, and a University of Wisconsin alumnus, Mr. Heller came to Wisconsin in the 1920s. During the Depression he started collecting the five-dollar prints distributed by the Associated American Artists (AAA) and continued to augment his holdings of contemporary prints through the 1970s. Sixty prints from the 156 donated to the Elvehjem are featured in *Selections from the Gunther Heller Print Collection*, which will be on view through August 10 in the Mayer Gallery. Works by many of the major names are represented—Thomas Hart Benton, John Stuart Curry, Grant Wood, Norman Rockwell, Reginald Marsh—as are those of less well known artists. Wood's lithograph, *Honorary Degree*, 1937, is one of the highlights of the exhibition. In it, the artist shows a caricature of himself as the squat, hesitant recipient of the degree, sandwiched between two towering, stern academicians. While clearly poking fun at the solemnity of such occasions, he recalls the fact that he had recently received an honorary doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. Luigi Lucioni's *The Mill*, 1939, is a fine etching, one of several prints showing the importance of the American landscape to artists in the 1930s and

1940s. The Heller collection also includes good examples of the innovative printmaking generated by American art schools in the 1940s through the 1960s. Works by Gordon Mortensen, John Ross, and Clare Romano, among others, show the range of experimentation in color woodcut, color etching, and color lithography which characterized much of American printmaking during the period.

The fact that so many of the prints in the collection were purchased through the AAA and other print clubs and graphic arts societies underscores the role these organizations have played in bringing original works of art to a wider public.

Madison Views: Recent Works by the Madison Watercolor Society, which will be on view from August 9 through October 12 in the Whyte Gallery, provides Elvehjem Museum of Art visitors an opportunity to view works by eighteen talented local artists. Over a year ago, an exhibition of watercolors depicting Wisconsin's capital city was proposed as part of the Festival of the Lakes, to be held in Madison in the fall of 1986. Stimulated by this idea, local artists have produced personal responses to the city and its people. The works range from views of

familiar landmarks to studies of architectural and landscape details, from an aerial view of the city and its lakes to a close up of wild flowers in a park, from people on the street to a polar bear in the city's zoo. They are painted in a variety of styles, ranging from the most precise realism to abstraction. Olive Roisum Wile's lake scene is reminiscent of nineteenth-century landscape paintings, while Vince Rideout's view of the University reminds one of the angular cityscapes and industrial scenes of Charles Sheeler from the early 1930s. Helen Blaesser's portrait of twenty mailboxes of different sizes, shapes, and colors lined up by the side of a road suggests that they might stand symbolically for the diverse community of residents which they serve. Indeed the wide range of images in the exhibition attests to the artistic maturity and individuality of the artists in the Society and to the variety of experience and setting to be found in Madison.

Finally, beginning on August 23, the Elvehjem's Mayer Gallery will feature *Dianne Blell Photographs: Modern Dreams of Ancient Times*. An expanded discussion of these large and evocative color photographs will be included in the next issue of *Artscene*.

Luigi Lucioni, *The Mill*, 1939, etching,
Gift of Gunther W. and Fay R. Heller



The Elvehjem

JULY

4 Friday

Museum closed in observance of Independence Day.

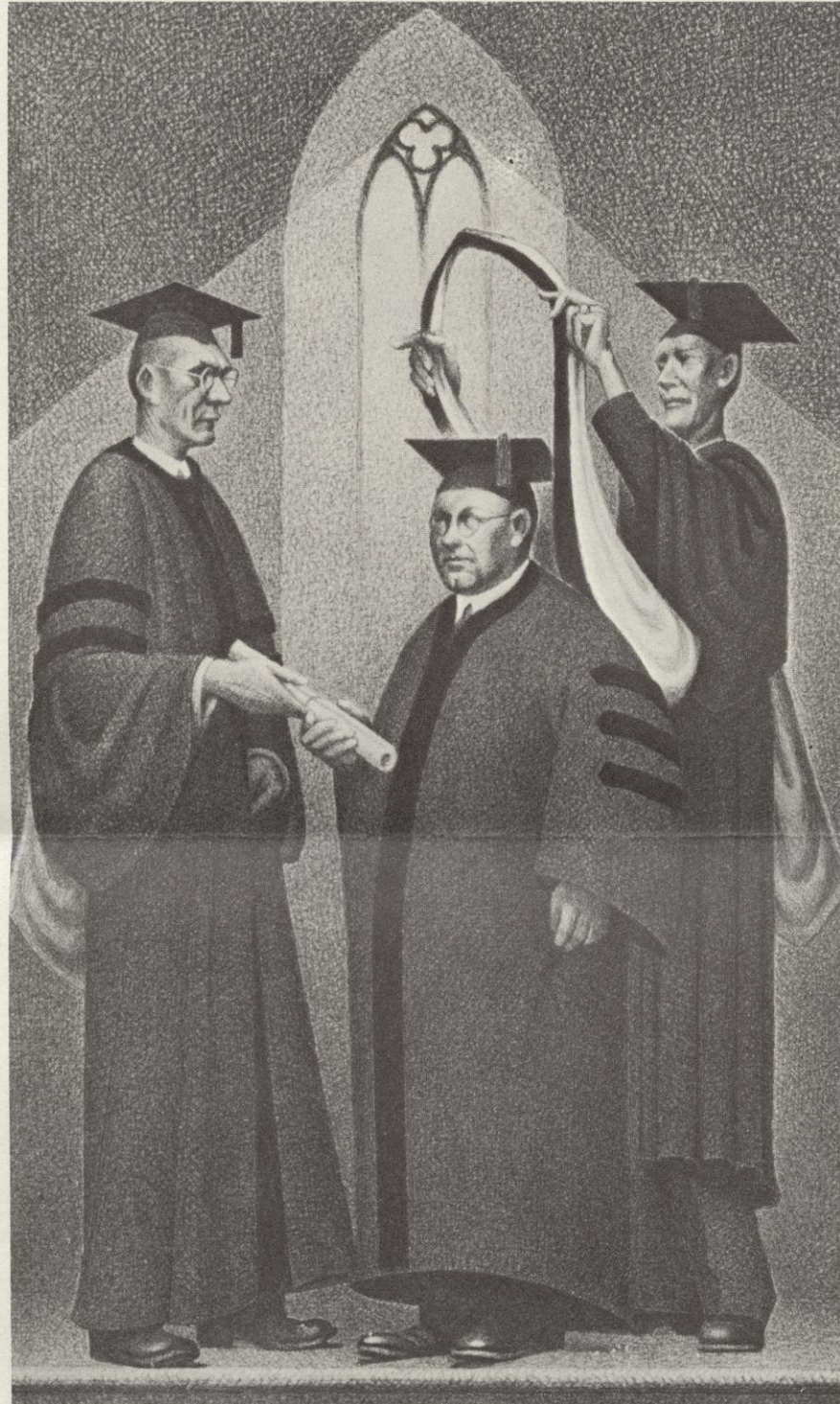
21 Saturday

Exhibition, *Selections from the Gunther Heller Print Collection*, opens in Mayer Gallery and runs through August 10.

27 Sunday

Exhibition, *Main Streets in Dane County*, closes.

On Sunday afternoons in July Docents Henryka Schutta (July 6 and 13), Fran Rall (July 20) and Susan Stanek (July 27) will give ten-minute talks on the Artwork of the Month, *Indian Hunter Boy*, by Randolph Rogers, in Paige Court at 3 p.m.



Grant Wood, *Honorary Degree*, 1937, lithograph, Gift of Gunther W. and Fay R. Heller

AUGUST

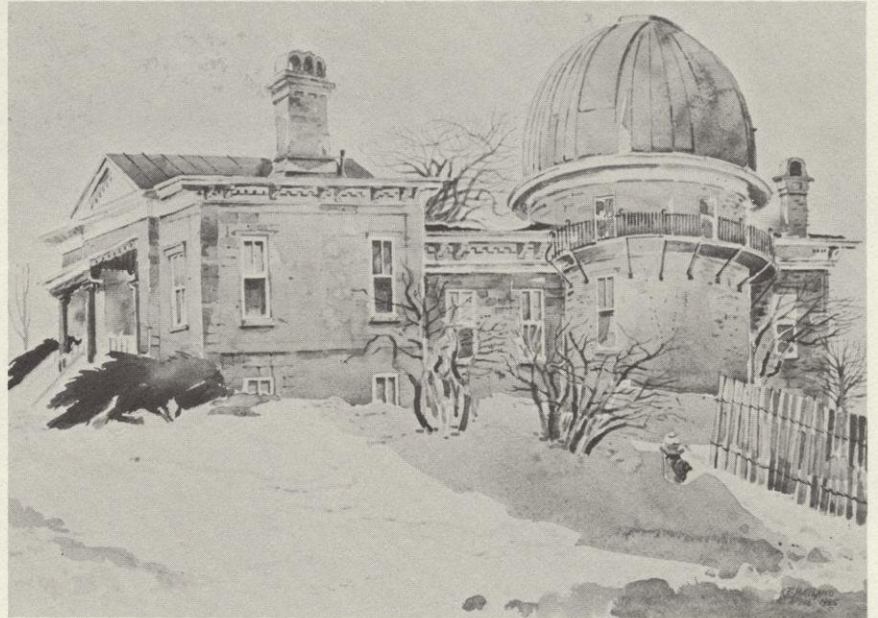
9 Saturday

Exhibition, *Madison Views: Recent Works by the Madison Watercolor Society*, opens in Whyte Gallery and runs through October 5.

23 Saturday

Exhibition, *Dianne Blell Photographs: Modern Dreams of Ancient Times*, opens in the Mayer Gallery and runs through October 5.

On Sunday afternoons in August Docents will give ten-minute talks on the Artwork of the Month, *Nine Views of Winter #1* by Jim Dine, in Paige Court at 3 p.m. On August 10 the Docent is Irmgard Carpenter and on August 31 it is Sara Fellman.



Edward Mayland, *Washburn Observatory*, 1986, watercolor, Lent by the Artist



Peggy Flora Zalucha, *From the Terrace*, 1986, watercolor, Lent by the Artist

The Elvehjem

EDUCATION

Profile of a Docent: Susan Stanek

Fifteen years ago this July, the Elvehjem Docent program was instituted. When the first Docent class was selected—as part of a service project of the University League—Susan Stanek was not sure she would be asked to join. After all, she was not a University League member. But then, Virginia Merriman (the first tour coordinator) learned that, while a student in Paris, Susan had given tours in French at the Louvre. A natural for that first class, Susan Stanek is still a valued Docent.

It was almost as though she had spent her life preparing to give tours. Though she had majored in math and science, Susan took a minor in art and literature and even attended the Sorbonne. Already as a child she had traveled widely and visited many museums with her cultivated parents. “For my children’s tours I try always to remember what it was like to visit museums as a child. When I was a seven-year-old, sculptures were big and scary for me. The museums were dark and dingy compared to the Elvehjem.” Susan remembers the museums of those times as a “world of adults,

culture, and artworks above eye level, for which children are not always ready.” Today, she uses that understanding of the child’s perspective in her tours.

According to Susan, in the early days of the Docent program the training was intensive. Her class met five days a week for the month of September in a crash course designed to help meet the program demands of the new Museum. Members of the Elvehjem staff were the instructors. Director Millard Rogers himself gave six training sessions, and without the help of the Kohler Art Library staff, says Susan, “I could never have prepared for those lectures.”

“There wasn’t much artwork available for us to discuss on our tours in 1971,” observes Susan. “When I couldn’t sleep, I would lie in bed and lead a tour in my head. I could locate and discuss every work of art in the galleries.”

To build interest in the new Museum, the pioneering group of Docents went out into the community, giving innumerable slide lectures. In that early class, in addition

to Susan and others no longer active in the program, were Marilyn Bownds, Sara Fellman, Helene Metzenberg, Fran Rall, Miriam Sacks, and Margy Walker. All of these fine Docents are still here and very much involved.

Susan stresses that she has enjoyed every tour group but says that some are more challenging than others. During her second year of tour-giving, for example, she guided a group of totally deaf children. The youngsters’ gratitude, expressed in sign language, is something Susan will never forget. On a recent tour, a group of older adults who first lagged behind, not wishing to get involved because they claimed not to know anything about art, left the galleries exclaiming “we hope to return often.”

Today the Elvehjem is fortunate to have not only Susan but a large dynamic and giving group of Docents, and the staff is more than grateful for their continuing involvement.

A new training class of Docents will be selected in August. Anyone interested should call Anne Lambert at 263-4421 by August 1.



Susan Stanek guiding a Hartland Elementary School tour.

The Elvehjem

MEMBERSHIP

New Leadership: **Donna Fullerton and the Elvehjem Museum League**

We are pleased to welcome Donna Fullerton as the next President of the Elvehjem Museum League and are delighted to share some of her plans for the coming years. Donna hopes to introduce new areas of volunteer service for League members, such as participation in the operation of the Museum Shop, staffing of the information desk in Paige Court during special events and peak seasons, and assisting in the daily, behind-the-scenes tasks of the Elvehjem. She believes that the League should continue to organize receptions and to help with members' trips and the annual membership drives, but also that League members can, and should, become more involved in volunteer services—both to help the Elvehjem and to provide more opportunities for members.

Donna would also like to work for a substantial increase in the number of members who support the Elvehjem and for more recognition of the efforts made by volunteers.

Donna Fullerton has served as Vice President of the League for two years. Since she came to Madison from Marshfield in 1975, she has been President of Friends of UW Hospitals and Clinics and has become a member of the Visiting Nurse Service Board and the Attic



Donna Fullerton and Rebecca Hunke discussing potential League activities.

Angels Association. During the ten years she and her family lived in Marshfield, she started the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, and with three partners, she opened the city's first bookstore. These accomplishments, in addition to her career as an occupational therapist, placed Donna in the *Who's*

Who of American Women.

Clearly a talented organizer, the League's new President is low-keyed, pleasant to deal with, and open to new ideas. The Elvehjem's staff looks forward to working with her and the enthusiastic League volunteers during an exciting and challenging season.

Elvehjem Publications Win Two National Awards

Two publications of the Elvehjem Museum of Art recently won national awards for graphic design in the CASE 1986 Recognition Program. *American Life in Our Piano Benches*, a catalogue published in conjunction with an exhibition of the art of American sheet music, received a bronze medal in the Visual Design in Print category. A poster of an eighteenth-century Japanese print, *The actor Ichikawa Danjūrō IV in a Shibaraku role*, received a gold medal in the same category. More

than 750 entries were judged in the Visual Design in Print category, with the Elvehjem's publications winning two of the seventy-four awards.

This is the second consecutive year that the Elvehjem has been recognized by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education for excellence in graphic design. Earl Madden, Art Director of the University of Wisconsin Publications Office, designed both poster and catalogue.

The Elvehjem



Dianne Blell, *The Selling of Cupids*, 1984, color photograph (Cibachrome process), Lent by the Leo Castelli Gallery.
From the exhibition *Dianne Blell Photographs: Modern Dreams of Ancient Times*.

Elvehjem Museum of Art
800 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706



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Monday–Saturday 9 a.m.–4:45 p.m.
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Museum Shop Hours:

Monday–Saturday 9 a.m.–4:45 p.m.
Sunday 11 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

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Saturday–Sunday 1–4:45 p.m.

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Admission is free



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artscene
July–August 1986

Important Dated Information!