

Bulletin 1978-1980.

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Editor's Note:

From its foundation in 1970, the Elvehjem Museum of Art (known as the Elvehjem Art Center until 1978) issued an annual Bulletin. Regular publication was interrupted in 1979 when both Eric McCready (Director from 1975 to 1979) and David Berreth (Assistant Director from 1976 to 1979) left the Elvehjem to assume positions in Texas and Ohio respectively. At that time, Carlton Overland, Curator of Collections, was appointed Acting Director but in effect was obliged to fill the positions of Director, Assistant Director and Curator for one-and-one-half years until Katherine Harper Mead assumed the position of Director in January of 1981. The decision was then made to publish a composite Bulletin which would focus on the Elvehjem's Tenth Anniversary, the celebration of which was held in November of 1980. Consequently, the scope of this Bulletin was expanded to cover a two-and-one-half year period.

Scholarly articles were solicited early in 1981 that were to treat the Tenth Anniversary acquisitions. The writing and editing of these new articles caused further delays in production schedules. It should also be noted that Katherine Mead and Assistant Director Stephen C. McGough (appointed in 1981) were actively engaged in the editing process at the time of the Director's tragic death in July of 1983.

The activities treated here and the lists of FRIENDS and contributors, as well as the staff listings, pertain to July 1978 through December 1980 only. However, allusion is occasionally made to activities that fall between January 1981 and June 1983. That period will be dealt with in the next *Bulletin*.

L.H.

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Cover Illustration: Kabuki Actors Iwai Kumesaburo and Ichikawa Danzō by Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825) from the Edward Burr Van Vleck Collection of Japanese Prints, bequest of John Hasbrouck Van Vleck.

he most important event of fiscal year 1978-79 was the "happening" known as "The Art of Norway, 1750-1914," the most extensive exhibition of that country's art ever held outside its boundaries. That exhibition raised the Museum's attendance to a record 130,000 visitors in one year, some 35,000 above the previous total. Sixty-two thousand visitors, nearly half the total, were counted during the nine-week period of "The Art of Norway," November 5, 1978-January 7, 1979. In addition, the fall of 1978 marked the beginning of the Forward with Wisconsin campaign, a major fund-raising drive undertaken by the University of Wisconsin Foundation under its executive director Robert Rennebohm, with William Biers as its national chairman. I am especially grateful for the ongoing support of the Foundation, Dean E. David Cronon and his associates in the College of Letters and Science, Chancellor Irving Shain and his assistant Arthur Hove, and especially the Museum staff for making 1978-79 a most successful year. In addition, the Elvehjem Museum of Art Council became increasingly active under the chairmanship of Mrs. Joyce Bartell, supported by the efforts of John Bolz who looked after the Museum's interest in the Forward with Wisconsin campaign. The Elvehjem Museum of Art exists not only as a scholarly resource tool for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but also for the State of Wisconsin. For as the motto of the State has always been, "the boundaries of the University are the boundaries of the State."

Summer

Twentieth-century sculpture was the focus of two major exhibitions during the summer months. "Ernest Trova" and "Gaston Lachaise, Sculpture and Drawings" were shown at the Elvehjem during August, September and October. The Lachaise Foundation was particularly cooperative in making available to us a varied and unique exhibition. The Elvehjem was also able to purchase a Lachaise drawing with monies from the Elvehjem Museum of Art Endowment Fund. Also during the summer Mark and Helen Hooper from Manitowoc, Wisconsin, continued their ongoing donation of twentieth-century European and American prints. An English seventeenth-century oak sideboard was given anonymously. Throughout this period and beginning in July, extensive preparations for "The Art of Norway" exhibition took place in seven of the eight fourth-floor galleries; repeatedly works of art had to be moved around in order to keep as many of the important permanent holdings on view as possible.

Fall

The first phase of the Elvehjem's sculpture garden and court was put in place when the large sculpture *Mother and Child* by William Zorach, Gift of the Class of 1927, was placed and all landscaping completed largely with funds provided by the Class of 1928.

Installation of William Zorach's cast bronze sculpture *Mother and Child* (1927, Class of 1927 Gift purchase) in the Class of 1928 Forecourt of the Elvehjem, facing University Avenue.



Funded by a \$149,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and supported by a federal indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities, "The Art of Norway" was a cooperative project involving the Elvehjem Museum, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts and The Seattle Art Museum in this country and the Nasjonalgalleriet, the Kunstindustrimuseet and the Norsk Folke-museum in Oslo. Some 260 objects, including paintings, furniture, textiles, and other decorative arts, were included to represent Norway's "Second Golden



Chancellor Irving Shain, Crown Princess Sonja of Norway and Director Eric S. McCready at the ribbon-cutting ceremony on November 3, 1979, for "The Art of Norway."

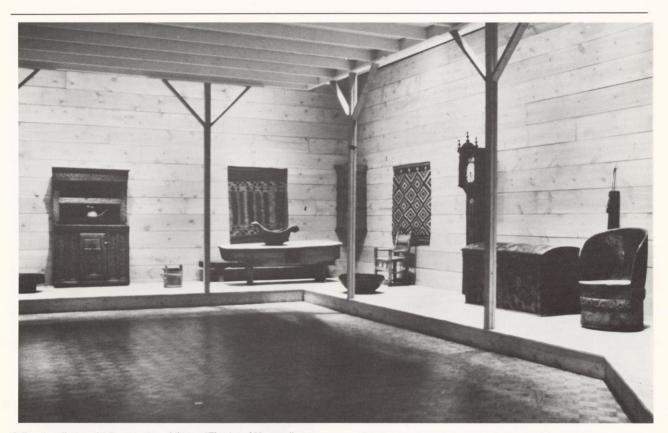
Age." A gala three-day weekend of events celebrated the opening of the exhibition.

Crown Princess Sonja of Norway officially cut the ribbon during a private dinner party in the Museum on November 3. The following night, 2,500 FRIENDS attended the preview reception, and the public opening on Sunday, November 5, similarly attracted 2,500 people. Also on that day, Dr. Knut Berg, Director of the Nasjonalgalleriet in Oslo and the principle liason in the organizational effort, delivered a public lecture. Other



A group of elementary school children admiring the Christmas tree with Norwegian decoration, on their way to "The Art of Norway," exhibition.

dignitaries in attendance for the weekend festivities included the Honorable Søren Sommerfelt, the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States; the Honorable Louis Lerner, U.S. Ambassador to Norway; Lord Mayor Albert Nordengen of the City of Oslo; Mayor Paul Soglin of the City of Madison; U.S. Representative Robert Kastenmeier;



Gallery installation of folk art in the exhibition "The Art of Norway."

Alf Bøe, Director of the City of Oslo Art Collections; and Mr. Byron Ostby, Norwegian Consul for the State of Wisconsin. The exhibition not only broke all previous attendance records, it was also the focus of the most intensive programming effort put forth by the Museum staff, with numerous guided tours, craft demonstrations, storytelling hours for children, concerts, lectures, and a continuous twenty-minute audio-visual presentation. On behalf of the Museum and the University, we again wish to thank the participating institutions, foundations, and individuals, both in the United States and abroad, who made this exhibition possible. In late autumn, several acquisitions were made to the Museum's permanent collection. Among them was a group of paintings and lithographs of American life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries given to the Museum by Amanda Berls of New York City; an eighteenth-century Queen Anne dropleaf table was donated to the permanent collection by Mrs. Coleman Woodbury of Madison; a significant pastel by Edward Shinn entitled *Green Door* was presented to the American collection by Mr. and Mrs. Edward C. Jones of Fort Atkinson; sixty-seven Greek and thirty-three Roman coins were added to the collection by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Frank; sixty-seven pieces of



Greek silver didrachm from Neopolis in Campania (300-241 B.C.) with the diademed head of the water nymph Parthenope (obverse), and a flying Nike crowning a man-headed bull (reverse). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Frank.

Chinese Export and nineteenth-century European porcelain came from Mrs. John C. Cleaver of Milwaukee; three Indian miniatures came from Mrs. Ernest C. Watson; an oil sketch by Sanford Gifford plus a pencil sketch by William Sidney Mount were given to the American collection by Mr. and Mrs. Stuart P. Feld of New York City; and seventy-four lithographs by Honoré Daumier were given by Helen Wurdemann of Los Angeles. To all these donors, the Elvehjem is truly grateful.

Winter

Following the closing of "The Art of Norway," the Museum opened a major retrospective of photographs by Andreas Feininger and turned its attention to an exhibition of Chinese scroll paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection of Chinese works of art on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In conjunction with this exhibition, a number of lectures and calligraphy demonstrations were given.

Major acquisitions during the winter months included the purchase of a painting by Walter Griffin entitled *Scene at Fleury, France,* 1893. This is the first American Impressionist painting to come into the permanent collection. The purchase was made possible through the generosity of the Thomas A. Brittingham Fund and the Elvehjem Museum of Art Endowment Fund. Previously on loan to the State Department office of Henry Kissinger, this



Greek silver didrachm from Velia in Lucania (4th century B.C.) with head of Athena (obverse) and lion walking (reverse). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Frank.

acquisition now holds a central place in the Elvehjem's American collection. In addition, through the generosity of the Earl O. Vits Endowment Fund, the Elvehjem acquired an eighteenth-century portrait, *Lady in Grey*, by Thomas Blackburn, the teacher of John Singleton Copley. Painted in 1765, this signed and dated work adds depth to the American holdings.

In January, Mark and Helen Hooper generously contributed an additional forty prints to the Hooper Collection. At the opening of "Studies in Connoisseurship: Chinese Paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection" exhibition, it was announced that the Elvehjem Associates had presented the Museum with a Roman limestone portrait bust of a scribe from the Eastern Empire and dating to the third century. In addition, the FRIENDS of the Elvehjem Museum of Art voted to present the Museum with a painting by Reynolds Beal entitled *Provincetown Waterfront*, 1916.

Major works of ancient art were also acquired through gift and purchase. These included an Attic White-Ground Footed Mastoid-Skyphos of the Pistias Class "M" made possible by the Cyril W. Nave Endowment Fund; 102 ancient Greek and Roman coins, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Frank; an Attic Black-Figure Komast Cup by the KY painter funded through the generosity of the Anonymous and the Humanistic Foundation Funds; and a Rhodian/Corinthian Aryballos in the form of a helmeted



Scene at Fleury, France (1893) by Walter Griffin. Brittingham Fund and Endowment Fund purchase.

warrior's head purchased through the Emily Mead Baldwin Bell Fund.

Spring

The Elvehjem Museum of Art was pleased during its spring season to cooperate with other Midwestern art museums in bringing "The Art of Russia, 1800-1850" to the United States. Opening at the Elvehjem on March 21, with a gala Russian ball, the exhibition was the core of a number of other planned activities, including music, theatre, dance, and lectures. In a lighter vein, concurrently with "The Art of Russia," the Elvehjem presented in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Museum of Art drawings and watercolors by George Cruikshank.

Two other exhibitions completed the program for the 1978-79 year: "Oil Sketches by Frederick E. Church," circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and "Chinese Snuff Bottles" from an anonymous local collection.

New acquisitions made during the spring were also significant. They included the gifts of ninety-four Oriental



Roman Bust of a Man Holding a Scroll (c. 3rd century A.D.). Elvehjem Associates Fund purchase.

ceramics from Mrs. B.H. Risdon of Pacific Grove, California, and three Corinthian and Rhodian animal figures for the ancient collection which continues to gain in strength and must be counted as one of the Elvehjem's most important collections. The Elvehjem has served, and will continue to serve, a public interested both in scholarship and quality. It was a great pleasure for me being the Director of the Museum during these years of critical growth and expansion.

Eric S. McCready

T he beginning of the year-and-a-half period under review here was a time of uncertainty for the museum staff. The nearly simultaneous departures in early July of Director Eric McCready and Assistant Director David Berreth, both of whom assumed museum directorships elsewhere, left the Museum with two vacant positions in the administrative hierarchy. The first tasks for a recycled acting director (who had previously filled the same post in 1974-75) were therefore to become retrained in administrative duties under the capable tutelage of Program Assistant Ruth Struve and to become more directly acquainted with non-curatorial program areas and personnel. For the rest of the staff, the first few months of the interim were a time of adjustment to a new administrator and to generally increased responsibilities. At the outset of this review, I wish to extend my congratulations and gratitude to those staff members who pulled together as a group so quickly and willingly to ensure, eventually, a smooth and successful transition. I would be remiss in not mentioning the special efforts made by Curator of Education Anne Lambert, who took over the public relations duties of the Museum in addition to serving on the Search and Screen Committee for a new director; Kathy Parks-Yoast, the Museum Shop Manager, who assumed responsibility for seeing various museum publications through production; the afore-mentioned Ruth Struve for her general administrative assistance; and Lisa Calden, Loni Hayman, Daniel Steen and Timothy Quigley, who collectively alleviated the load of curatorial responsibilties.

If those summer months of 1979 were a period of readjustment, they were also a time of continuation. One project which began in earnest during that summer and which, as it turned out, was to last through the following summer, was the photographic documentation of the entire collection. This was carried out under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and ultimately resulted in the recording of 2,200 objects. This project not only kept a photographer, Don Stott, busy for over a year, but it also kept the Registrar's office occupied with identifying, indexing and filing negatives and contact sheets to insure the systematic retrieval of information. By October, the staff had settled into its new situation and, on the twenty-first of that month, the Museum unveiled its major exhibition offering of the fall, "Chinese Export Porcelain from the Ethel and Arthur Liebman Collection," a collection which has been housed in the museum since 1973 as gifts or intended gifts of Mr. and Mrs. John C. Cleaver. This exhibition afforded visitors the chance to view a truly impressive collection of Chinese porcelains created for the Western market between the seventeenth and early twentieth centuries.

Shortly after the opening of that exhibition, another event occurred in Madison which, while it affected the Museum and its staff only indirectly, had a symbolic importance. At a luncheon at the Madison Club, former Director Eric McCready was honored by receiving knighthood in the Order of St. Olaf for his efforts in promoting Norwegian/ American relations through the "Art of Norway" exhibition. A personal honor for Eric, and one well deserved, I choose to believe that this honor carried with it, if only vicariously, a recognition of the effort which the entire staff put forth in organizing that exhibition.

Even before Eric's knighthood, another development was afoot which had its roots in "The Art of Norway" exhibition. In mid-October, notification was received that a grant application to the Brittingham Family Trust had been approved, which would provide funding for a rotating loan of paintings by Edvard Munch from the Munch Museum in Oslo for two years. In late January, 1980, Alf Bøe, the director of the City of Oslo Art Collections (Oslo Kommunes Kunstsamlinger), which includes the Munch Museum, came to Madison, bringing with him the first painting in the series, The Sick Child of 1926 (see article p. 43). At the opening reception of "Bon à tirer: Twentieth-Century Prints from the Permanent Collection" on January 26, Mr. Bøe, the painting and the loan program were "unveiled." The following day, Mr. Bøe delivered a public lecture on "The City of Oslo Art Collection." The choice of the first painting was especially appropriate to the "Bon à tirer" exhibition, since the featured and most recent acquisition in that exhibition was Munch's etching and drypoint of 1894 of the same subject, a print acquired



Gallery installation of "Bon à tirer: Twentieth-Century Prints from the Permanent Collection" and *The Sick Child* (1927, signed and dated 1926) by Edvard Munch, lent by the Munch Museum, Oslo.

during the preceeding fall from a private collection (Frank J. Sensenbrenner Endowment Fund purchase).

By the time "Bon à tirer" and The Sick Child were introduced to the public, the curatorial staff, characteristically, was deeply immersed in another project. Assistant Curator Daniel Steen and myself, in collaboration with Professor Narciso Menocal, architectural historian on the Art History faculty, had undertaken during the fall the organization of an exhibition devoted to the work of the noteworthy (but previously little noted) Chicago architectural firm of Keck and Keck, two brothers who had pioneered passive solar heating during the 1930s. The three of us poured over thousands of drawings and photographs in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin archives, selecting the works to be exhibited, and Professor Menocal wrote an essay on the achievement of the brothers Keck. We were aided in these endeavors by William Keck, the younger of the brothers, who provided additional materials and information. The "George Fred Keck and William Keck: Architects" exhibition was accompanied by a selection of watercolors by George Fred Keck, the elder brother and an avid painter. With sadness, I must record that the two exhibitions came too late for George Fred Keck to see in person, being terminally ill at

the time and, unhappily, dead before the year 1980 was out.

The "George Fred Keck and William Keck: Architects" exhibition was organized in conjunction with the annual convention of the Society of Architectural Historians which was held in Madison in mid-April. In addition to that exhibition, two smaller exhibitions devoted to the work of Frank Lloyd Wright were presented, one organized by the Wright Foundation and the other by William Storer, devoted to Wright's Usonian theory of domestic architecture. The combined burden of the local chairmanship of the SAH Convention, the organization of the conference, the collaboration in the exhibition and a normal teaching load required of Professor Menocal a truly heroic effort.

By the spring of 1980, the entire Museum staff was immersed in the plans for our Tenth Anniversary celebration to be held in the fall. Victor Kord, then-Chairman of the Department of Art, had proposed an exhibition of the alumni artists from his department to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the School of Education of the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Since that anniversary coincided with the Museum's tenth, we agreed that it would be appropriate to share our

Opening reception of "Five Decades: Recent Works by Alumni of the Department of Art," the Tenth Anniversary celebration held on November 1, 1980. The two anniversary gifts displayed are Burchfield's Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight and Gottlieb's Recurrent Apparition.



celebrations. A committee comprised of Lisa Calden of the Museum staff and four Art Department faculty members (Professors Gibson Byrd, Richard Reese, Frederick Logan and Warrington Colescott) culled through hundreds of names, consulted with other faculty members and came up with an impressive group of graduates to represent the Department of Art over the past "Five Decades." Meanwhile, throughout the spring and summer, significant acquisitions were being made by the Museum, both through purchases and gifts. In April, Elvehjem Museum of Art Council Chairman Newman T. Halvorson and his wife donated an acrylic-on-paper painting by Mark Tobey. Shortly thereafter, Magne Malmanger, Curator of Paintings at the Nasjonalgalleriet in Oslo, alerted us to the

Moonlight on the Coast (1852) by Johan Christian Dahl. Evjue Foundation Fund purchase.



availability of an oil sketch by Johan Christian Dahl, "the father of Norwegian painting." This fine piece was available for purchase from a private collection in Norway, and the transaction was completed through the generosity of the Eviue Foundation. In May, through funds granted by the Humanistic Foundation Committee of the Madison campus, prints by Nancy Graves, John Cage, Robert Indiana, Richard Hamilton, Allen Jones, Sam Francis, and a cast-paper multiple by Frank Gallo were acquired. In August, Mark and Helen Hooper gave fresh evidence of their generosity by donating twenty-two prints by Stanley William Hayter along with the first print by Georges Braque to enter the collection. With the 1980 gift of eight Greek and Roman coins, the Arthur J. Frank Collection of 300 ancient coins (given over a four-year period) was made complete. Most of the coins in this important collection are on permanent display. In addition to in-kind contributions, the Museum continued to receive cash contributions from many people during the year-and-a-half under consideration. While too numerous to mention here, the continuing support of alumni and the FRIENDS of the Museum is most appreciated.

During the spring semester, Curator of Education Anne Lambert, working closely with Professor Barbara Buenger of the Art History faculty, supervised several Art History graduate students working on projects relating to the Munch loan program. In early May Professor Robert Rosenblum of Columbia University, a leading authority on late-nineteenth century painting, delivered a public lecture on "Munch as a Nineteenth-Century Artist." That lecture was sponsored by the Brittingham Family Trust Fund. Over the course of the summer, Anne Lambert produced an audio-visual program on "Edvard Munch: The Early Years" which was available for viewing in the galleries throughout the fall. In July, the first exchange of Munch paintings took place. The Sick Child was returned to Oslo and a new painting, Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand of 1904-05, came to Madison.

The beginning of the fall semester brought with it quickening activity devoted to the Tenth Anniversary celebration. Margie Elwood, FRIENDS Coordinator, together with Robert Rennebohm and Martha Taylor of the University of Wisconsin Foundation, organized a special "Tenth Anniversary Fund" drive, the response to which over a period of several months was most gratifying. Preparations on the "Five Decades" exhibition continued apace, involving shipping sixty-five art works from both coasts as well as from Mexico, Canada and Europe.

Finally, on the first weekend in November, the gala celebration occurred. On the night of October 31, Chancellor Irving Shain hosted a dinner party at the Madison Club for past and present members of the Elvehjem Museum of Art Council. The honored guest was Katherine Harper Mead, who a few months earlier had been appointed as the new director of the Museum by Dean E. David Cronon of the College of Letters and Science. In addition to introducing Mrs. Mead and welcoming her to the University, Chancellor Shain announced that the Brittingham Family Trust had made a special grant to the Museum occasioned by her assumption of the directorship in January of 1981.

The following morning, November 1, the Elvehjem Museum of Art Council gathered for its semi-annual meeting, again with Mrs. Mead as the special guest. That evening, the gala FRIENDS preview reception took place, attended by 700 people including members of the Department of Art faculty and exhibiting alumni/artists. At a presentation ceremony recognizing the joint anniversaries of the Museum and the School of Education, as well as introducing Mrs. Mead to the FRIENDS membership, two new and major acquisitions were featured, both specifically occasioned by the Tenth Anniversary. The first was Charles Burchfield's Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight of 1963 (see article p.26), gift of Mr. and Mrs. Newman T. Halvorson. (Two other gifts, though not on view, were also announced, the painting Birch Brush by Andrew Wyeth of 1972, from William Beverly Murphy (see article p. 38) and the lithograph La Modiste dressant un chapeau of 1893 by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec from Mr. and Mrs. Gordon R. Walker.) The other featured acquisition, the painting Recurrent Apparition, by Adolph Gottlieb of 1946

(see article p. 14), deserves special attention since it was the object of a most intense screening process. Professor James Dennis of the Art History department was brought into the proceedings at an early date, and over a period of several months, we reviewed and eliminated dozens upon dozens of prospective works. The Gottlieb painting was selected for its importance within the context of twentiethcentury American art. The purchase was made through funds provided by the Elvehjem Associates and the FRIENDS of the Elvehjem as well as from contributions to the Tenth Anniversary Fund, including a special donation from Mrs. Emily Mead Baldwin Bell. Thus, as had been hoped, the Tenth Anniversary celebration provided the impetus for major additions to the permanent collection. The support of all those who contributed to the success of that event is greatly appreciated.

With all the excitement and satisfaction generated by the anniversary activities, that celebration, as it turned out, proved not to be the emotional climax of 1980. We had not yet had a chance to catch our breaths when we were faced with a new and dramatic venture. Within a week of the celebration, Emeritus Dean Mark Ingraham walked into my office with a mysterious, yet impish, smile on his face to inform me he had received unofficial word that the Edward Burr Van Vleck collection of Japanese prints had been bequeathed to the University. This collection was well known in Madison, since it had been formed here during the 'teens and 'twenties by Edward Burr Van Vleck, then a professor of mathematics at Madison. The collection had been inherited by his son, John Hasbrouck Van Vleck, who, though he had grown up in Madison and had taught for several years at the University, had spent most of his academic career at Harvard University. While various University officials had talked to Professor Van Vleck over the years about leaving his father's collection to the Elvehjem, it was generally assumed that the collection would go to Harvard. Thus, Dean Ingraham's announcement came as quite a surprise.

For three weeks, operating under a cloak of secrecy due to concerns for Mrs. Van Vleck's security and aware of the need to arrange quickly for the physical transfer of the



Actor with Danjūrō-mon in role of Shibaraku (18th century) by Ippitsusai Bunchō. Bequest of John Hasbrouck Van Vleck.

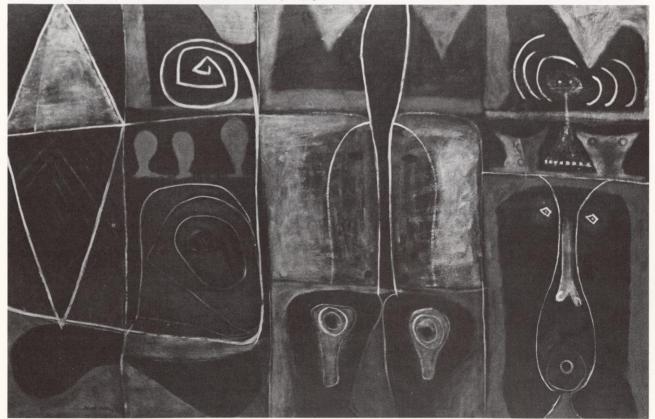


"Fine Wind, Clear Morning" from the Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji (c.1829-33) by Katsushika Hokusai. Bequest of John Hasbrouck Van Vleck.

collection to the Museum, we negotiated with Mrs. Van Vleck's lawyers. Once arrangements had been made for the appraisal necessary for estate purposes, Lisa Calden, our registrar, and I flew to Boston to pack and escort the collection to Madison. The first week in December was spent appraising, inventorying and packing the prints in Mrs. Van Vleck's Cambridge apartment, a process made more frantic by the fact that the number of prints exceeded the original estimate of 1,000 by almost three-fold. The final count was 2,800 prints which were transported back to Madison. For the remainder of the month and into 1981, the curatorial staff was closeted in the basement, unpacking and re-inventorying the collection, establishing concordances, cross-listing the works and consulting scholarly references. It was a learning experience for the staff and an exciting one, with its future promise of countless exhibition possibilities and a major resource for study. As a result of the Van Vleck bequest, the Elvehjem now has the second largest holding in Japanese prints for a university museum in this country. Clearly, between the Tenth Anniversary celebration and the Van Vleck bequest, the period under review ended on a note of high optimism. **T** he oil painting of 1946 by Adolph Gottlieb, *Recurrent Apparition* (Fig. 1), invites, as any good painting must, appreciation as a singular aesthetic moment. From that initial experience an understanding of the work as part of the artist's development may be determined by noting its assimilation of modern stylistic conventions and by recognizing its relationship to the contemporary intellectual forces acting upon the artist at the time.

Traditionally proportioned, the canvas is one third greater in horizontal length than in height. Divided into irregular registers of twelve or thirteen unevenly rectangular compartments, the painting avoids a strictly engineered grid pattern. It also avoids strict symmetry, with its most pronounced vertical accent rising to the right of center. This black stamen-like shape outlined in white emerges from between two joined, flat-topped forms that are transformed into black cyclopic images by the introduction of single eye-to-nose shapes, each with a ringed dot inside. The stamen shape bisects a round helmet form scumbled on either side with light pigment and perforated with a set of eye holes and nostrils. It then swells upward into an

Fig. 1 Adolph Gottlieb, Recurrent Apparition, 1946, oil on canvas, 36"H., 54"W., Elvehjem Museum of Art. Elvehjem Associates Fund, Friends of the Elvehjem Fund, Emily Mead Baldwin Bell Fund, and Tenth Anniversary Fund purchase.



anther area that stands out against a softly focused triangular pattern backed by the modulated orange that serves as a field for most of the black shapes of the painting.

The swollen stamen shape is repeated in the lower right corner compartment where it circumvents the eyes, nose, and circular mouth of a dark mask form. It is also rhythmically reflected to the left by three stunted orange nodules sitting in a row underneath the pinwheel tail of a long white line that loops down around a third cyclopic head form. The eye of the latter, surrounded by a bluegrey tone and encircled by blemished white lines, seemingly stares at the upper right corner of the painting where a two-part square contains a complex configuration. Of all the "apparitions" this particular one presents the most sinister aspect. Against a dark narrow rectangle two yellowish pointed hoods, attached to a horizontal base, flank a scumbled, hallucinatory totem whose translucent, long-necked head transmits radiating triple parentheses in white. Three pairs of small round eyes are disrupted by a scar across the left hood form that causes a tenuous order of sight to realign itself vertically. As with the entire painting, a symmetrical emphasis is thus thrown askew. That this is the case may be judged by concentrating on the three left-side compartments of the overall composition. There, an arbitrary kite shape, lacking in organic relevance to the other major components, abruptly distracts from an otherwise total cohesiveness.

The eccentricities of composition and ambiguities of subject matter in this work are shared with approximately five hundred paintings by Gottlieb that he conceived as antinarrative "pictographs," a word derived from Latin and Greek roots meaning "to paint" and "to write" respectively. As will be discussed, they developed in the 1940s following an early style of eclectic pictorial generalizations abstracted from exterior views or still lifes. The succeeding pictographs prefaced in process, if not to a great degree in specific form, the climax of Gottlieb's expressionist powers dramatized in the Imaginary Landscapes, and the Burst and Blast paintings of the fifties. Transitional therefore characterizes such "pictographs" as the Elvehjem's Recurrent Apparition. Weary of repeatedly drawing prescribed subject matter from external source material directly observed, Gottlieb wished to give free rein to both composition and content originating from his imagination without premeditation or preliminary study. In this effort his rise to a mature art of abstraction represents a major trend among American painters of this period. Influenced by earlier examples of Surrealism and by theories of creative procedure learned from leading Surrealists exiled in New York during World War II, many contemporaries, including Mark Rothko, Arshile Gorky, William Baziotes, and Jackson Pollock, created works that bear a family resemblance to each other in their transfigurations of imaginary plant and animal forms.¹ On their way to unmistakably personal means of expression they ostensibly released these abstract biomorphic symbols from subconscious states in accordance with Freudian means of pure psychic automatism, and thereby revealed universal imagery that qualified for Jungian interpretation as archetypes.

Like his immediate friends and associates in New York, Gottlieb ultimately liberated his paintings from popular modern European styles that had originated in Cézanne's precisely structured art, in Cubism, or in Picasso's work of the thirties. Through a desire to unite conception and execution as a single act of intuitive expression, he achieved a stylistic kinship, exemplified in *Recurrent Apparition*, with the more abstract versions of Surrealism identified by Miró, Tanguy and Matta. The "pictographs" arbitrarily juxtaposed vaguely recognizable elements within what Max Ernst had referred to as an indefinite border region between the inner and outer worlds.²

In order to reach a profoundly abstract level of aesthetic refinement, Gottlieb had to advance slowly through several phases of figurative reduction. Though once a student at the Arts Students League in 1919 under John Sloan, Gottlieb had never adhered to conventions of urban realism. He shunned its scenes of crowded tenement streets, Coney Island, Union Square, or the Bowery. The closest Gottlieb came to such subject matter or to anything

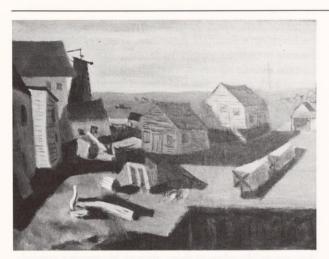
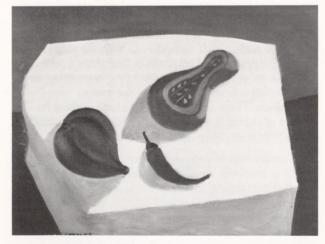


Fig. 2 Adolph Gottlieb, Untitled (Gloucester Harbor Fisheries), c. 1933, oil on linen, 17 7/8"H., 23 15/16"W., © 1979, Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, Inc., New York.

remotely resembling local color occurred in paintings executed in the coastal resorts of Gloucester and Rockport, Massachusetts on summer visits beginning in the early 1930s (Fig. 2). His depictions, however, of harbors and fisheries, dock buildings and boats, were condensed to elementary means of concisely designed compositions. In low-keyed color schemes of limited hues, they nevertheless contrast abruptly sunlit surfaces against dark shadows while tilting ground or floor planes to accompany flattened figures onto the surface. Still lifes from the late thirties include such random objects as cacti, gourds, and bones collected during a two-year stay in Arizona (Fig. 3). Widely spread out over tabletops that parallel the picture plane, these focal forms and their minimal backgrounds continue the pictorial abstraction employed in the Gloucester-Rockport works.³

Approximately seven paintings done around 1940 conform to popular notions of Surrealist imagery based on pictures by Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, and Yves Tanguy. For example, in *Picnic, Box and Figures* (Fig. 4), small, loosely connected constructions of cones and spheres barely hold together inside and outside an open-ended box that parallels a blue ground stripe receding to a horizon line. A roughly sketched Brooklyn Bridge outlined against a painterly sky further suggests dream imagery. Standardized Surrealist devices on the part of Gottlieb may be considered as a kind of rhetoric, statements intended to counter the social realism and regionalism that dominated painting in the United States throughout the thirties. His turning to Surrealism provided an antidote to what he referred to as "an enormous vacuum to be filled" in American art. "I felt free to try anything, no matter how absurd it seemed: what was there to lose?"⁴

Gottlieb's effort to disassociate himself completely from "artistic nationalism" and to rid himself of eclectic, stylistic borrowings precipitated the pictographic phase of his career beginning in 1942. Both his external revolt against liberal traditions of modern painting and his new innerdirected probes for a purely intuitive expression of universal content were soon publicized in manifesto form



in a letter to *The New York Times*. This was written in reaction to a critical review by *New York Times* art critic Edward Alden Jewell in which he questioned a "new globalism" in the Third Annual Exhibition of the

Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors held in June, 1943.⁵ Borrowing the term from the Federation's catalogue, which encouraged artists of the world meeting in America to "accept cultural values on a truly global plane,"⁶ Jewell singled out a Gottlieb painting entitled *The Rape of Persephone* and Mark Rothko's *The Syrian Bull* as indicative of this expanded view.

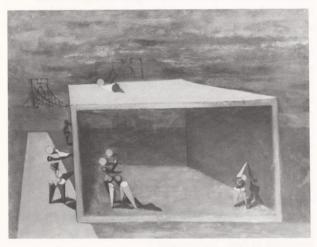


Fig. 4 Adolph Gottlieb, Picnic (Box and Figures), c. 1939, oil on linen, 25 7/8"H., 33 7/8"W., 1981, Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, Inc., New York.

Signed by both artists the letter to *The New York Times* contains traces of Surrealist art theory while circumventing, in favor of cryptic Jungian allusions, Surrealism's basic origins within Freudian psychoanalysis. In the name of truth, flat forms and large shapes on the picture plane are equated with "the simple expression of the complex thought." At the same time, not to be inhibited by reason, art to them was an "unknown world," a world "of the imagination . . . fancy-free and violently opposed to common sense." While insisting that subject matter must remain a crucial aspect of painting, they considered only that which is "tragic and timeless" as valid. Therein lies a "kinship with primitive and archaic art."⁷ With such a universal frame of reference, Gottlieb's

newly emerged pictographs could be related to Jung's assertion that recurring motifs, ranging from primitive or ancient myths to the dreams of individuals, may be interpreted as symbolic manifestations of a "collective unconscious."

As intuitive, indeed counter-rational, nonsequential compositions the pictographs document an experience of psychic automatism as advocated by André Breton in his Freudian-inspired Surrealist manifestos.⁸ In discussing his pictographic process, Gottlieb essentially paraphrased Surrealist theory.

I used the process that was similar to automatic writing, which was using the method of free association. And I would start by having an arbitrary division of the canvas into rough rectangular areas, and with the process of free association I would put various images and symbols within these compartments . . . it was purely following an impulse, which was irrational, trying to use the method of free association.⁹

In subject matter and content, however, the arbitrary imagery of the pictographs, seemingly primordial, would qualify in Jungian terms as psychic remainders from the historical past. But whether Freudian or Jungian in emphasis, difficulties of interpreting the pictographs through analytical psychology multiply as repetitious head forms, eyes, fish or bird shapes, and ambiguous biomorphic forms gradually give way by the early fifties to geometric shapes, circles, arrows, "x" intersections, and to the increasingly pronounced vertical and horizontal dividing lines, as exemplified in the last versions (Fig. 8).

Gottlieb's initial pictographic "impulse" led him directly to Freud's source of incest analysis, the Oedipus legend, which ostensibly represented a consistently recurring psychological dilemma (Fig. 5). The eyes and hands, noses and crowns that persist as the major motifs of the Oedipus series, beginning in 1941 and ending around 1945, may signify the king blinding himself but say little about the desire of the son to murder his father and possess his mother. The ordered disorder of imagery, spontaneously compartmentalized with no hieratically paramount motif was designated by the artist "as a stream of consciousness" when he stated, "I disinterred some relics

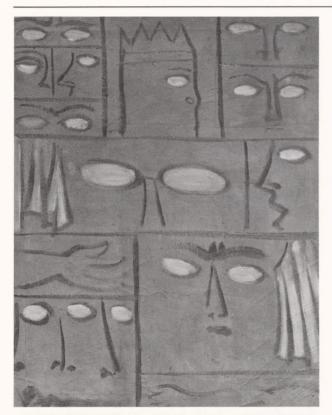


Fig. 5 Adolph Gottlieb, Eyes of Oedipus, 1941, oil on canvas, 32"H., 25"W., Private Collection, New York.

from the secret crypt of Melpomene . . . I juxtaposed my pictograph images to be ultimately fused within the mind of the beholder."¹⁰

One can begin in any compartment, view the pictographic paintings in any direction and formulate new relationships through the random disposition of their primary elements. Thereby any pair of images transubstantiates particulars. Thus in *Recurrent Apparition* the image in the lower right compartment reads as a dark mask with a bone nose, circle mouth and tiny trapezia eyes. But invert the entire right vertical area of the painting and the eyes relate to eight

white teeth projecting over an unsightly tongue suspended in a black void. The nose in the meantime becomes a ragged phallus inserted into a narrow passage.

A free-associative randomness occurred repeatedly in paintings by Paul Klee and the Uruguay-born, Paris-based artist Joaquin Torres-García, but their means of composition as well as their pictographic aspects differ respectively from those of Gottlieb. Neither seemed to allow for random rearrangements and transformations of overlapping imagery at the will or whim of the observer. The pictographic multiplicity of the discrete, line-drawn figures and flat shapes in Klee's 1937 painting A Sheet of Pictures (Fig. 6) acknowledges the schematic mode of children's picture writing, filling up the surface as if it were an open space. In so doing, it forbids the motifs from interchange in any direction, unlike the metamorphoses allowed in Gottlieb's painting.11 Otherwise the two artists do have a common inclination among imaginative figural abstractionists toward remote sources of exotic subject matter. Long before the American in this case began his collection of African miniature sculpture, from which he doubtlessly absorbed primitive imagery, Klee had studied examples of African, Oceanic, and Pre-Columbian art in museums in Bern, Switzerland,12

Although at a glance compartmentalized, "Constructivist" paintings by Torres-García from the thirties appear to anticipate Gottlieb pictographs, their ruled rectangular divisions are more precisely grid-like and their "packaged" items derive directly in technique from analytic Cubism (Fig. 7). Consciously organized renderings of slightly fragmented objects: tools, clocks, guitars, cups, bottles, and fish, all neatly contained, divide into simulated low reliefs. Stylistic contrasts aside, a more relevant preface to Gottlieb's concern for "spiritual kinship with primitive and archaic art" was provided by Torres-García's written theories of creative process. These are concisely contained in a brief essay he published in a 1932 issue of Cercle et *Carré*. Entitled "Raison et Nature" it urges artists to search out the "great line" of unity originating in a prehistoric era, "base of thought and the base of ourselves." His belief that intuitive images of the artist belong with "historically



Fig. 6 Paul Klee, Sheet of Pictures, oil on canvas, 23 1/2"H., 22 1/4"W., Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

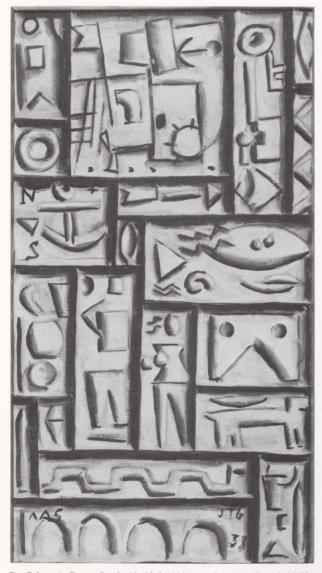


Fig. 7 Joaquin Torres-García, Untitled, 1938, gouache on cardboard, 32"H., 17"W., Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo. Gift of the Seymour H. Knox Foundation, Inc., 1967.

detached signs" engraved in the stone of "lost" civilizations equates Torres-García's art theory with Gottlieb's practice ten years later.¹³ To both may be applied Jung's contention that primordial root images emerge as archetypes from the personal unconscious.

The greater degree to which Gottlieb's imaginative personal motifs resemble particular designs or details of tribal iconography in the arts and crafts of American aborigines, the greater a coincidence it becomes. For example, nineteenth-century Chilkat blankets woven in the Tlingit tribes, the northernmost Indian tribes on the northwest coast, provide instances of interchanging stylized facial features, transformed in a vertical direction. But, more precisely patterned than Gottlieb's, and held within a strict symmetry, compartmentalized eye, nose, and mouth forms alternate in a decorative figure-field relationship. Lights and darks take shape without the intervening white or black lines of the painter.

Since Gottlieb professed his pictographic process to be totally irrational and referred to those "symbols" which he did not understand as his favorites, conclusive interpretation of doodle-like images for immediate, let alone universal, meanings was obviously never intended.¹⁴ Systematic evaluation that attempts to detect and define underlying patterns of symbol formation must acknowledge a world of the imagination, "fancy free and violently opposed to common sense."15 As in several paintings by Jackson Pollock in the early 1940s, counteracting male and female imagery occurs in Gottlieb pictographs from the time of *Recurrent Apparition*; this duality may be interpreted as expressive of Jung's designation of opposite sexual instincts as animus and anima. Benevolent or maleficent signs of either the feminine personification in men, the anima, or the masculine personification in women, the animus, could by way of a Jungian exercise, be deciphered in such pictographs as Sorceress, 1947, Oracle, 1947, Man Looking at Woman, 1950.16

By 1947, however, the Cold War race to build a hydrogen bomb underway, Gottlieb was speaking of more immediate, external crises as basic to the content of his pictographs:

Different times require different images. Today when our aspirations have been reduced to a desperate attempt to escape from evil, and times are out of joint, our obsessive, subterranean and pictographic images are the expression of the neurosis which is our reality. To my mind certain so-called abstraction is not abstraction at all. On the contrary, it is the realism of our time.¹⁷

This growing impulse toward an abstract realism expressive of a new age ultimately excluded the pictographs in favor of larger, more concise statements created for "the impact of the unequivocal."¹⁸ By the late 1940s the pictographs as such began to falter, when their structural partitions became increasingly prominent, threatening to close up the compartments completely and eliminate in a painterly scramble the few remaining signs and isolated geometric shapes. At best the results were dynamically decorative canvases that continued into the mid-fifties (Fig. 8).

In the meantime, by dividing a canvas horizontally into two disparate parts, Gottlieb introduced his Imaginary Landscapes series. From *The Frozen Sounds, Number 1*, 1951 (Fig. 9), through *Saturnalia*, 1962, each picture separated into an "earth" area of dense, nondescriptive, painterly strokes and an upper space of suspended geometric shapes freely rendered. Although tenuous, some connection with nature, always obscure and *ex post facto*, was sensed by Gottlieb.¹⁹ In keeping with the expanding realities of their immediate times, his Imaginary Landscapes by chance paralleled in appearance photographs selected by the science-oriented, theorist-artist Gyorgy Kepes for an exhibition at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1951 called, *The New Landscape in Art and Science.*²⁰ "Imperceptible" natural phenomena of mass, space, movement, sound, and light photographed through ultra-high speed telescopic, microscopic, telephoto, and other technologically advanced lenses came into view as beautiful interrelationships.²¹ With complementary prescience to these, Gottlieb had been painting an inner vision, a subjective awareness of physical realities beyond immediate experience.

His understanding of this invisible surrounding had been primed and prepared for by the intuitive signs and symbols contained in the pictographs. Finally, in monumental scale befitting the Space Age, Gottlieb split his culminating paintings of the fifties into two basic elements (Fig. 10). A blast area threatens an amorphous volume hovering nearby in a vulnerable state of gaseous flux. This polarization presents in aesthetic balance the awful sublime of possible annihilation that terrorizes a post-industrial, nuclear era. As an ultimate signal, it supersedes the poetically ambiguous symbols summoned from the unconscious, whether personal or collective, that were registered in the compartments of a pictograph.

> James M. Dennis Professor of Art History University of Wisconsin-Madison

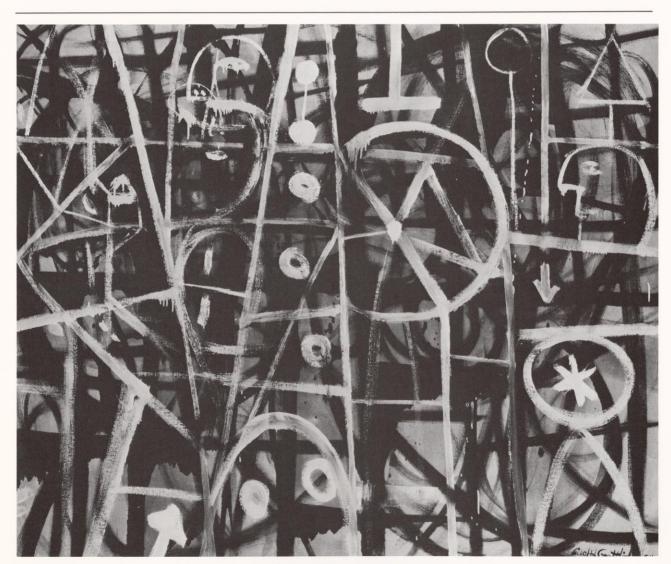


Fig. 8 Adolph Gottlieb, The Cadmium Sound, 1954, oil on canvas, 60"H., 72"W., © 1977, Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, Inc., New York (Collection: Philadelphia Museum of Art).

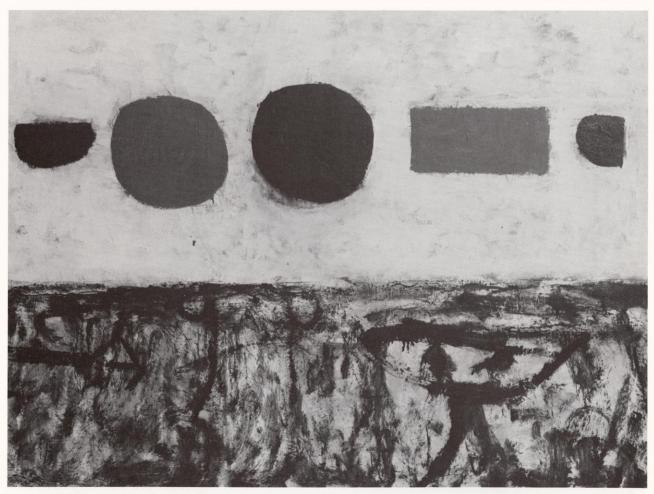
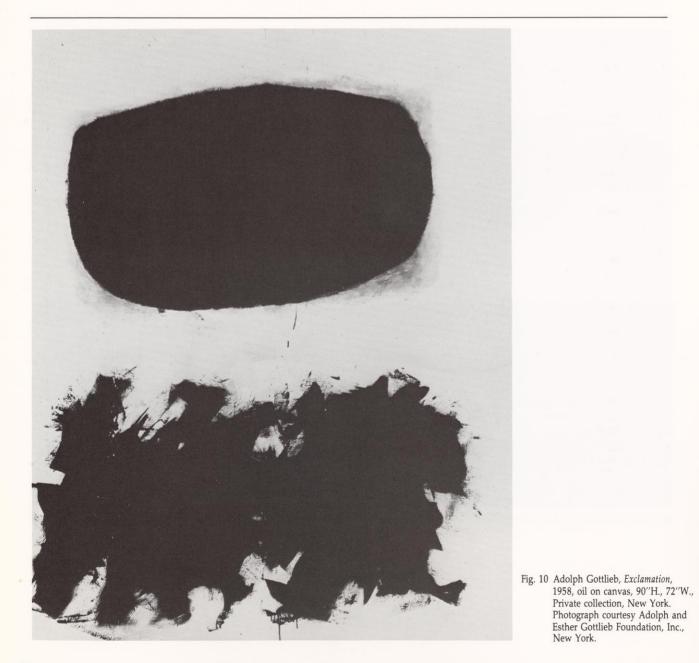


Fig. 9 Adolph Gottlieb, The Frozen Sounds, Number 1, 1951, oil on canvas, 36"H., 48"W., Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.



Footnotes

1. Paintings in the mid-1940s by William Baziotes, Arshile Gorky, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Jackson Pollock share in an abstract imagery that alternates within a given form between plant and animal appearances. See *Lawrence Alloway*, "The Biomorphic Forties," *Artforum* (September, 1965), pp. 18-22. Sources of biomorphism in American painting predating Surrealism may be found in early works by Arthur G. Dove and Charles Burchfield.

2. Max Ernst, "Was ist Surrealismus?," 1934, reprinted in the catalogue Max Ernst (Stuttgart: Württembergischer Kunstverein, 1970), p. 49.

3. For a documented account of Gottlieb's early art and career see Miriam Roberts' Introduction to the exhibition catalogue *Adolph Gottlieb Paintings*, 1921-1956 (Omaha: Joslyn Art Museum, 1980), pp. 13-28. Roberts insists on labeling Gottlieb's Gloucester-Rockport paintings "expressionist."

4. Gottlieb quoted in "Jackson Pollock: An Artists' Symposium, Part I," Art News (April, 1967), p. 31.

5. The New York Times, June 6, 1943.

6. Annual Exhibition of the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors, (New York: Wildenstein Galleries, 1943).

 Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, Letter to the Editor published in Edward Alden Jewell's column "The Realm of Art: A New Platform; 'Globalism' Pops into View," *The New York Times*, June 13, 1943, p. 9.

8. Breton's most significant Surrealist manifestos, both the first in 1924 and the second in 1929, defined "pure psychic automatism" as being "free from any control by the reason." That this process was "independent of *any* esthetic or moral preoccupation" was modified somewhat in the second manifesto with the addition of the word *conscious* following *any*.

9. Gottlieb quoted in "Adolph Gottlieb, Two Views," from an interview by Jeanne Siegel, Arts Magazine, XLII, 4 (February, 1968), p. 30.

10. Gottlieb quoted by Sidney Janis, *Abstract and Surrealist Art in America*, (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1944), p. 119. Melpomene is a muse of tragedy.

11. For an insightful evaluation of Paul Klee's schematic mode of picture making in relation to origins of writing see James Smith Pierce, *Paul Klee and Primitive Art*, Outstanding Dissertations in the Fine Arts (New York: Garland Pub., 1946), pp. 140-56. Exhibitions of Paul Klee paintings became quite plentiful in New York during the late thirties and early forties. The Buchholz Galleries and the Nierendorf Galleries exhibited his works season to season from 1938 onward. The Museum of Modern Art held a Bauhaus exhibition in the winter of 1938-39 and a memorial Klee exhibition in 1941. Catalogues were published for all the exhibitions, large and small. *Art News* reviewed them consistently. It is altogether possible that Gottlieb was familiar with the Klee painting *A Sheet of Pictures (Bilderbogen)*.

12. The late art historian Robert Goldwater has suggested that Klee also apparently assimilated New Guinea images of fish and plants into *A Sheet of Pictures*. Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Painting* (New York: Harper, 1938), p. 154.

13. Joaquin Torres-García quoted by Dore Ashton, Unknown Shore: A View of Contemporary Art (Boston: Little and Brown, 1962), p. 57. While Ashton states that Gottlieb never came in contact with Torres-García and apparently had not known his paintings, Francine Legrand in her essay, "The Sign and the Open Form," which appears in *Art Since Mid-Century*, The new Nationalism, Vol. I, Abstract Art (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1971), pp. 103-37, claims that Gottlieb was under the influence of Torres-García when he embarked on his pictographs in 1941. Neither author offers any documentary proof one way or the other. The opportunities for Gottlieb to see works by Torres-García in the original were limited. In 1941 the Société Anonyme acquired ten works by the Uraguayan from the twenties: four New York City scenes and six carnival studies. The Museum of Modern Art acquired two paintings in 1942: Composition (1932) and The Port (1942). No exhibition of his work alone was held by a commercial gallery in the United States during the thirties and forties. Also no publications about him or by him appeared in English during these decades. See the excellent catalogue from a Joaquin Torres-García exhibition of 1970 published by the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design. Its comprehensive bibliography includes all the writings by the artist and on the artist to date.

14. "Adolph Gottlieb, Two Views," interview with Jeanne Siegel, Arts Magazine (February, 1968), artist's statement, p. 30.

15. Gottlieb and Rothko, The New York Times, June 13, 1943, p. 9.

16. For color illustrations of these paintings, among others, see exhibition catalogue *Adolph Gottlieb: Pictographs*, introductory essay by Karen Wilkin (Edmonton, Alberta: The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1977).

17. Adolph Gottlieb, "The Idea of Art: Eleven Graphic Artists Write," The Tiger's Eye, Vol. 1, No. 2 (December, 1947), p. 43.

18. Gottlieb and Rothko, op. cit.

19. See Gottlieb's statement quoted by John I. H. Baur, Nature in Abstraction (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 68.

20. This parallel between Gottlieb's Imaginary Landscapes and the photographs selected by Kepes for the M.I.T. exhibition was discovered and discussed by Joann Moser in an unpublished paper for a seminar on nature abstraction in twentieth-century American painting, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1973.

21. See Gyorgy Kepes, The New Landscape in Art and Science (Chicago: Theobald, 1956).

n his journals Charles Burchfield (1893-1967) once I referred to himself as "an inlander in spirit," remarking that hay or wheat fields seen on a windy, clear day lured his imagination as much as the ocean would have.¹ The description is apt in that the artist consistently chose his subjects from the countryside near his home. Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight (1963, Fig. 1), in the collection of the Elvehjem Museum of Art, records such an habitual episode of the natural world: a swarm of migrating Monarch butterflies flitting through the moonlit sky above a flowering meadow.² Yet the event sustains an edge of miracle and mystery. This singular phenomenon of butterfly migration has eluded complete scientific explanation; and were such found, the arduous, continentspanning flight of these graceful creatures would remain an awesome spectacle. Burchfield's portrayal of the event enhances this aspect of the extraordinary. Through the metamorphosis of form he worked on the familiar locale and event and the artistic license he exercised with biological fact-Monarchs usually roost at night-this American watercolorist has led the viewer far beyond the immediate, physical actualities into the realm of visionary experience.

Because Burchfield's pictures lack significant antecedents among major formal developments in Western art and evolve from his profound emotional attachment to his subject, evaluation of the Elvehjem painting and of his art in general should concentrate on the view of nature presented. Within the context of American cultural history, the artist's transformation of landscape may be better appreciated as an outgrowth of the still active mythmaking that the promise of the New World has inspired since its discovery and that has shaped American depictions from the early nineteenth century onward.

In a major study of these myths of the land, historian Roderick Nash explained their cultural function:

Wilderness was the basic ingredient of American civilization. From the raw materials of the physical wilderness Americans built a civilization; with the idea or symbol of wilderness they sought to give that civilization identity and meaning.³ When its settlers began to gain an upper hand through tilling, the uncultivated features and vast scale of the waning wilderness came to be esteemed as a manifestation of God and the virgin landscape, valued as a source of aesthetic pleasure and moral benefit as well as national identity. In the nineteenth century, paintings by Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand, and George Inness attest to this growing reverence. Contemplation of their painted images of nature was intended to transport audiences to communion with the divine and a state of spiritual renewal. As demonstrated by the careers of Burchfield, Arthur Dove, Marsden Hartley, and John Marin, nature paintings of our century have grown increasingly personal and abstract in their interpretations. Nonetheless, in their quest for transcendent values they retain allegiance to the traditional mythic dimension of the land and American landscape painting.

Burchfield's quest produced the highly imaginative landscapes of the pre-1920 and post-1943 periods, which he considered his most significant work. Characteristically these watercolors portray rural meadows and woodlands in flux, transfigured by the artist's romantic temperament and his vitalist perception of life as the perpetual action of an inexplicable force of energy. *Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight* (Fig. 1) exemplifies the mature expression of his lifelong dialogue with the nature order when his interpretations had evolved from the earlier accountings of specific events, heavily colored by the artist's moods, to the allegorical syntheses that celebrate the animating impulses of nature.

Throughout the more than fifty years that he painted, Burchfield, almost without exception, drew his subjects from intimately known locales around his homes, first in Salem, Ohio, and then in Gardenville, New York. During his middle period, from approximately 1919 to 1943, this preference took as its major focus the streets and aged architecture of small towns that are interspersed with details and close-up studies of developing technology. Rendered in a stark, somber realism, these urbanized landscapes established the artist's reputation as a painter of the American Scene. At the same time he continued to

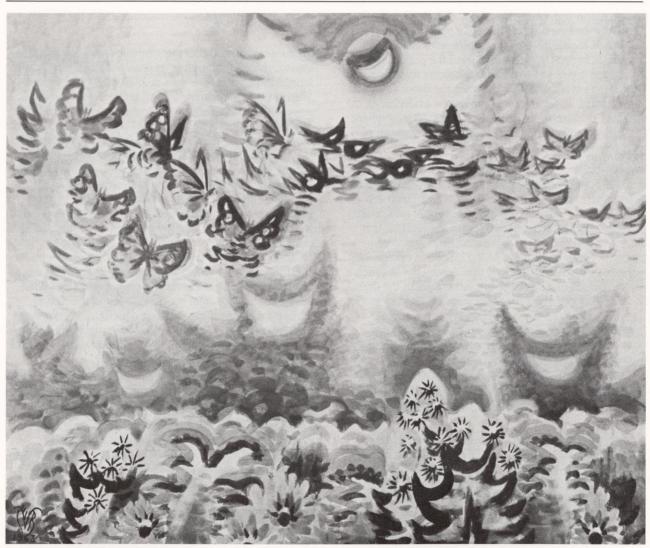


Fig. 1 Charles Burchfield, Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight, 1963, watercolor on paper, 32"H., 39"W., Elvehjem Museum of Art. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Newman T. Halvorson.

experiment with the more inventive, abstract views of nature that had preoccupied his early period, and in 1943 abandoned Main Street for the uncultivated countryside and woods beyond. He also re-entered the province of fantasy and childhood that had inspired the watercolors of 1917-19 and retained his partiality for the dynamic aspects of the natural world: nature in process, as evidenced in the transition of seasons, the changes in weather, atmospheric and light conditions, and the sounds and movements of birds and insects.

Representative of a genre of night subjects, which includes the 1917 Starlit Woods (Fig. 2), the later The Sphinx and the Milky Way (1946, Fig. 3), and Dandelion Seed Heads and the Moon (1961-65, Fig. 4), Migration of Butterflies calls on the complete range of thematic and formal conventions that Burchfield had devised to convey the eerie nocturnal vitality of nature in process. As the black and orange wing patterns, swarm formation, and title denote, the watercolor depicts the native American Monarch species in the flight on its annual migration. The only butterfly to make such a seasonal pilgrimage, the Monarch travels to the more temperate southern climates in September and returns north in the late spring or early summer.⁴ In the Elvehjem watercolor (Fig. 1), sequences of wing beats fill the silvery sky above luxuriant masses of pink and lavender blossoms and twinkling, black-eyed daisies that promise the travelers an abundance of nectar on their continental journey.

Like most of Burchfield's compositions, this watercolor summarizes the spectrum of organic activity. The radiant energy of the sky gives intimations of the chemical processes on which the plant and animal kingdoms depend. The nectar-laden flowers and airborne butterflies attest to the cooperative interaction that characterizes the biological processes of propagation, evolution, and survival. Through these carefully edited images of butterfly migration, flowers, and nighttime heavens, Burchfield realized an evocative juxtaposition of microcosm and macrocosm. Through their implied appositions of unity and variety, of the fragile and the omnipotent, of the fugitive and the enduring, these images enjoin the viewer to ponder the intriguing contradiction and miracle that is life.

To elaborate formally on the symbolic connotations of the subject, the artist utilized a "grammar of expression," as he termed it. Initiated with the pre-1920 works and refined after 1940, this "grammar" is not unlike certain practices associated with Surrealism and includes the use of spatial disjunctures, arbitrary alterations of size and scale, stylized motif-conventions, and double images.5 The reduction of the landscape of Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight to a narrow band of ground and broader area of sky enhances the emblematic appearance and underscores the iconic function. The restricted sense of depth allowed by these planar zones counters the recessional thrust of the curling stream of insects and impels the swarm into a high-relief prominence, virtually overhead in the viewer's space. The resultant spatial tension stands as a subtle variation on the theatrical effect witnessed in Starlit Woods (Fig 2). There, as though targeted by a mental telescope, a tree-silhouetted shaft of light leaps from the background to the picture surface to command the onlooker's notice. The outcome in both instances is the same. Spatial contradictions reinforce the significance of featured images and work to involve the spectator physically as well as emotionally.

Adjustments in the size and scale of the landscape features further enrich the symbolic import and encourage viewer participation in an Alice-in-Wonderland experience. By adopting the same low eye level and 1:2 ratio of land to sky used for *Starlit Woods*, Burchfield has located the meadow of *Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight* within the cosmic scale of the universe and invited the audience to join in a fantasy of miniature size.

Finally, calligraphic conventions serve as the basic nouns and verbs of Burchfield's "grammar." They designate nature's denizen and the occasional detail of architecture, monitor the artist's emotional response, and augment the visual record with reports of animal activity, wind, weather, light, and heat. Curvilinear strokes of gray and black pigment trace the flight path and wing beats of the butterflies in the Elvehjem watercolor. Amplified in the pale gray tones of the sky, these crescent forms describe



Fig. 2 Charles Burchfield, Starlit Woods, 1917, watercolor on paper, 33 1/2"H., 22 1/4"W., Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Coleman Mopper.

the beams of light emanating from the new moon.

In their most highly developed form, the calligraphic motifs function as double images. While recognizable as flowers, knotholes in trees, or windows, they bear a secondary resemblance to human facial features and convey a range of emotional states that the artist formalized as "Conventions for Abstract Thoughts" and illustrated in a 1917 notebook.⁶ In *Starlit Woods* (Fig. 2), moonlight falling on tree stumps transforms them into malevolent, staring eyes, while the black, mouthlike cavern of the tree hollow exudes a frowning menace. Likewise the scowling pansies, and the comma configuration of Fear and the twin-peaked form of Morbidness, used to describe the windows of the houses and the middle-ground foliage of *The Sphinx and the Milky Way* (Fig. 3), contribute to a mood of foreboding.⁷

In his later years Burchfield handled these conventions in a freer manner to register more generally and abstractly the artist's presence and nature's dynamics. The facelike character of the flowers has been played down in *Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight*, and the rhythms of plant growth, wing motion, and light waves integrated into an all-over pattern of curvilinear brushstrokes that is formally suggestive of a latent energy and harmony unifying the natural world. Concurrently, the transparency of the pigment and the levitating tendency of these crescent passages of brushwork endow the scene with a visionary aspect as they record the artist's exultation in the event.

Burchfield believed that the making of symbols is central to the act of art and should be directed toward heightened expressions of actuality.

An artist should paint, not what he sees in Nature, but what is there... to do so, he invents symbols, which if properly used make his work seem even more real than what is in front of him. He does not try to by-pass Nature; his work is superior to Nature's surface appearance but not to its basic laws.⁸

In his works, the fusion of the real with the symbolic is accomplished through the choice of select manifestations of nature's ongoing life processes and their portrayal as the artist's empathetic experience of his subjects. Because their images stimulate intuitive, sensory, and emotional involvement as well as intellectual scrutiny, the watercolors solicit an active participation from the spectator. Under Burchfield's brush the natural world becomes the resonator for human states of mind; in turn, the human species in the person of the artist-spectator empathizes with the vital conditions of plant, animal, and chemical spheres of life.

In giving his intuition free exercise in the act of creation and in his pictorial evocations of Nature Sublime, Burchfield belongs to the tradition of Romanticism. Throughout his career he exploited the highly sensitized states of emotion that his regular expeditions in the out-ofdoors provoked. Enriched with sensations and associations stirred by memories of similar moments the interpretive promptings of emotion were integrated with his exhaustive naturalist's observations in the resultant visualizations. During the teens, turbulent emotions aroused by particular incidents guide and dominate his painted accounts. Landscape features were reshaped in accordance with an Expressionist intensity of feeling that he was experiencing at the time but which also reflected his boyhood attachment to nature.

Burchfield had discovered in the fields and woods surrounding his home in Salem, Ohio, a substitute for the close friend he lacked from the sixth grade to his junior year in high school and habitually sought companionship in the familiar rural landscape of Post's Woods and the Little Beaver Stream. In the course of daylong expeditions he explored and mapped the terrain, observed and recorded signs of the changing seasons, weather conditions, and animal habits, and collected assortments of insects and tadpoles and plants for his wildflower garden. Additionally, his investigations took a literary, artistic turn in high school. At age fifteen he began to keep journals and, by the time he graduated, had channeled his fervent interest in nature into his second passion, art. After the completion of a degree at the Cleveland School of Art and a futile attempt at further study at the National Academy of Design in New York, Burchfield suffered, as he



Fig. 3 Charles Burchfield, The Sphinx and the Milky Way, 1946, watercolor on paper, 52 5/8"H., 44 3/4"W., Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica, New York.

described in his journals, a period of emotional crisis. Finding solace in nature once again, the young artist turned this crisis gainfully toward his art. From his effort to recreate nostalgic, childhood sensations of nature emerged the first of his fantasy interpretations.

Echoing a journal description of a venture into Post's Woods, *Starlit Woods* (Fig. 2) remembers the intimidating solitude of the forest at nightfall:

... a night walk over luminous fields—a wild wind out of the southwest—I entered Post's Woods, fascinated by its awfulness, but fled away in terror; as I had stood looking where nothing was, two stumps suddenly appeared; the black north was awful.⁹

Such early paintings see nature as a mysterious, awesome force that underlines human insignificance and arouses in the spectator those responses of terror, astonishment, and reverence that Edmund Burke associated with the Sublime, as defined in his famous essay of 1752, "A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful." In keeping with Burke's requirements, the sublimity of Starlit Woods depends on the implication of great size or distance, rugged, irregular forms, darkness, sharp contrasts of light and dark, and sensations of suddenness. The trees tower darkly overhead, their spiky branches and gaping hollows discouraging the viewer's passage. Beyond, a shower of silvery rays and the bend of the horizon intimate the infinite expanse of the universe, its powers felt in the pulsating blue-blackness of the sky and twinkling cold lights of remote stars. Reduced to a child's size by the exaggerated scale of the trees and low eye level, the viewer also shares childhood's apprehension as the baleful stares of moonlit stumps issue final warning against the beckoning allure of the night.

A Romantic temperament continues to color Burchfield's presentation of the natural world after 1943, but it loses that edge of "Gothick" terror that lingers in *The Sphinx and the Milky Way* (Fig. 3). Under the spell of the moon-filled skies, the magical flight of the Monarch, and the heavenbound reverberations of the brushwork, the epic-scaled, nocturnal landscape of the Elvehjem watercolor acquires a gentled aspect of sublimity. Tempered by the

guardianlike spectre of moonlight that signals the presence of a beneficent deity, Nature Sublime now moves the artist to jubilance. However, the energized character the artist gave to *Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight* incorporates the animation of natural process as well as the influence of emotion.

In their allusions to the dynamics of the natural order. Burchfield's watercolors from the early and especially the late periods may be understood as responses to contemporary concepts of reality which saw the essence of life as energy and change. These concepts were notably popularized through the writings of the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941), in whom public interest in America peaked between 1912 and 1917 after the release of the English translation of *Creative Evolution.*¹⁰ Charles Burchfield would have encountered Bergsonian thought through his acknowledged acquaintance with books by the well-known American naturalist John Burroughs, whose thinking was shaped by this vitalist philosophy.

Always a reader, the artist had made nature the subject of an intense literary review the year between his graduation from high school and enrollment at the Cleveland School of Art. His selections included Thoreau's Walden and all that he could find written by the prolific Burroughs-his devotion to the latter evidenced by the patterning of his own journals after those of Burroughs.¹¹ In all likelihood, therefore, Burchfield would have eagerly sought out his mentor's The Breath of Life when it appeared in 1915.¹² Probing exhaustively into the mystery of life, its origins and essential, distinguishing properties, this book drew heavily on the philosophy of Henri Bergson and quoted at length from Creative Evolution. Burroughs' advocacy of Bergson's theory here and in other writings of this time, combined with the Frenchman's poetic, imaginative literary style, would have offered an attractive inducement for Burchfield's further attention to a vitalist-defined Nature.13 The close parallels that may be drawn between Burchfield's thought and visual interpretation and Bergson's outlook attest to such a period of attentiveness and influence.



Fig. 4 Charles Burchfield, Dandelion Seed Heads and the Moon, 1961-65, watercolor on paper, 54 3/4"H., 38 1/2"W. Private Collection, Courtesy of Kennedy Galleries, Inc., New York.

Burchfield's portrayal of nature as ongoing process, as matter penetrated by an animating force, is sympathetic to fundamental theories set forth by Henri Bergson in his *Creative Evolution*. Bergson conceived the essence of life to be *élan vital*, an impetus which, while opposed by the inertia of matter, continues to progress undiminished:

At a certain moment, in certain points of space, a visible current has taken rise; this current of life, traversing the bodies it has organized one after another, passing from generation to generation, has become divided amongst species and distributed amongst individuals without losing anything of its force, rather intensifying in proportion to its advance.¹⁴

He premised his concept on the workings of human consciousness, including both rational and intuitional faculties. Using this same model, the philosopher also derived a notion of psychological time, which he designated as duration (la durée). Defined in terms of the individual's awareness, duration involves the activity of intuition and its simultaneous sensing of past, present, and future, which he likened to the rolling actions of a snowball. Duration enfolds memory with perception, sensation, and anticipation. Bergson associated this state of perpetual becoming with three orders of activity: "extensive," as in a physical or mechanical movement, extending action into space; "qualitative," as in a chemical change; and "evolutionary," as in the transformation of larva into nymph into insect, or as in the mutation of a species. It is Bergson's élan vital and the dynamic process of life it perpetuates, as they are encountered through these three manifestations of material transformation and experienced in duration, that serve as the engendering agents and subjects of Burchfield's symbol-making and the formal revisions he imposed on the landspace.

Basic to the thoroughgoing animation of Burchfield's nature compositions are the "extensive" and "qualitative" demonstrations of vital motion. The interwoven strokes of blue-black pigment and white dots of starlight that activate the winter sky of *Starlit Woods* (Fig. 2) and the swirling masses of gray-blue heavens and clouds and windswept trees that issue from the lunar eye of *Dandelion Seed Heads and the Moon* (Fig. 4) testify to the earth's rotation and

surface air currents. The celestial-bound crescent forms of *Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight* encompass both mechanical and chemical dimensions of vitality in their designation of plant, growth, wing motion, and light waves and imply a universe whose core is pure energy.

During the last two decades of his career, when poor health curtailed his outdoor activity, Burchfield turned from a narrative construct derived from specific experiences to compose scenes according to a more inventive scheme of allegory. These proceed thematically from the artist's growing preoccupation with the "evolutionary" aspects of Bergson's vital order. *Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight* follows the lead of *Dandelion Seed Heads and the Moon*, affirms the fundamentally progressive, creative character that Bergson had attributed to *élan vital* and evolution:

The essential thing is the continuous progress indefinitely pursued, an invisible progress on which each visible organism rides during the short interval of time given it to live.

Now, the more we fix our attention on this continuity of life, the more we see that organic evolution resembles the evolution of a consciousness in which the past presses against the present and causes the upspring of a new form of consciousness, incommensurable with its antecedents.¹⁵

The watercolors acknowledge that principle of innovative development in drawing their imagery from the capsulized demonstrations of evolution that may be identified with the butterfly and flower, their metamorphic cycles of growth and the adaptive capability responsible for the dandelion seed parachute and Monarch's migratory instinct.

In both pictures the abstract configurations of their compositions complement the Bergsonian imagery. They reiterate formally the basic definitions of genesis and evolution and parallel certain metaphors the philosopher employed to clarify his concept of reality. The lunar center, circular orbit, and spiral expansion of the vortex organizing the sky of *Dandelion Seed Heads and the Moon* allude to the primordial impulse of *élan vital*, its perpetual motion and progressive, cumulative results that Bergson envisioned in *Creative Evolution* as a wavelike, circular pulsation: From our point of view, life appears in its entirety as an immense wave which, starting from a center, spreads outwards, and which on almost the whole of its circumference is stopped and converted into oscillation: at one single point the obstacle has been forced, the impulsion has passed freely.¹⁶

The ascending pattern of crescent profiles of the Elvehjem watercolor recalls Bergson's comparison of the generative action of *élan vital* to that of a rising current that penetrates, uplifts, and sustains the opposing inertia of matter for a time in a condition of life: "Life as a whole ... will appear as a wave which rises, and which is opposed by the descending movement of matter."¹⁷

In his inquiry, the French philosopher had systematically investigated origins and properties of the vital order within the context of current scientific evidence. Finding no satisfactory answers from this review, he ultimately assumed a more subjective, empirical approach to the issue, utilizing the data of his consciousness. He concluded that although *élan vital* is a useful image for explaining the nature of life, in actuality life "is of the psychological order, and it is the essence of the psychical to enfold a confused plurality of interpenetrating terms."¹⁸ The psychological order is antithetical to the linear compartmentalizing that characterizes the exercise of intellect; any attempt to probe the secret and mystery of life, he insisted, must rely on intuitive modes of knowing, which preserve this quintessential multiplicity:

While intelligence treats everything mechanically, instinct proceeds, so to speak, organically. If the consciousness that slumbers in it should awake, if it were wound up into knowledge instead of being wound off into action, if we could ask and it could replay, it would give up to us the most intimate secrets of life. For it only carries out further the work by which life organizes matter¹⁹

Conditioned as is our mind to the habit of intelligence, the effort to sustain an intuitive state requires a violent, painful exertion of the will and in the end can be maintained only momentarily. However, if such a routine of interaction between the mind and nature is established, a prolonged state may be possible.²⁰ Likewise, the experience of art, as Bergson explained in his essay *Laughter*, may provide some

sensation of that primordial push of life, since the realizations of art incorporate a presocial, precivilized aspect of self and existence and their creation and appreciation presuppose the subjective mental processes. The art object and its encounter can bring the viewer into contact with

certain rhythms of life and breath that are closer to man than his inmost feelings It also seems as if an appeal had been made within us to certain ancestral memories belonging to a far-away past—memories so deep-seated and so foreign to our present life that this latter, for a moment, seems something unreal and unconventional, for which we shall have to serve a fresh apprenticeship.²¹

With the attempt to regain his boyhood perspective on nature, which started in 1916, there evolved in Charles Burchfield an elusive sensation he termed "North." Associated in the mind of the artist with the geographic direction, this intuition evoked images of woods, blackness, night, thunderheads, crows, August evenings, remoteness, childhood, the elemental, and, above all, mystery, and frequently generated the imagery and themes of his paintings up to 1920 and after 1943. Visions of the "North" as "strange phantom lands" and "enormous moonlit cliffs with water roaring at their bases" would unexpectedly claim his thoughts while he was at art school in Cleveland. At times they became more frightening as he reported in the nocturnal Post's Woods incident. Sensations of the "North" would captivate Burchfield throughout his life. They gradually lost their intimidating tone but continued to conjure up images of a primeval or ultimate state of nature, vast spaces, and qualities of remoteness, elusiveness, and mystery. Finally, in a journal entry from 1954, the artist filled out the description of this unknown land of his imagination. Referring to the "North" as "a thing I am always aiming at and hoping to achieve," he queried its origins:

Some fabulous Northland unlike any place on earth—a land of deep water-filled gashes in the earth; old lichen-covered cliffs and mesas, with black spruce forests reflected in the pools, against which white swans gleam miraculously. This romantic land of the imagination, the mysterious north that has haunted me since I was a boy—it does not really exist, but how did it come into being?²²

As evidenced by this series of descriptions, Burchfield's creative pursuit of the Northland bears an uncanny resemblance to Bergson's philosophical quest of *élan vital* and its encounter through the work of art. The artist, like the philosopher, characterized his object of endeavor as something elemental and intimately known yet forever obscure. As with *élan vital*, the first appearance of the "North" can be located but its origins remain a mystery. So, too, its presence can be intuitively sensed and palpably felt but its existence can never quite be tangibly confirmed or rationally verified. In tandem with the complement of associations it elicited and the pictorial metamorphosis of nature it nurtured, Burchfield's tantalizing sensation of "North" may be interpreted in Bergsonian terms as the artist's experience of *élan vital* in duration-a mystical revelation of life as sensed in the consciousness and as manifest in the natural order of favorite outdoor haunts.

In some instances, the pictures of the last decade incorporate conventional religious connotations of transcendence into the Bergsonian equivalent, that is, the progressive, perpetual becoming of the vital order. Such is the case with Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight. In addition to the obvious reference of the moonlight apparition, the subjects of metamorphosis and migration represented by the Monarch butterflies in themselves introduce an extensive body of philosophical, religious associations. Traditionally, the butterfly has been regarded as a symbol of the human soul and its flight and metamorphosis linked to the passage of the soul through an earthly existence into the eternal realm of the spirit. This symbolism is wide-ranging both historically and geographically.²³ In Christian iconography, the butterfly signifies the resurrected soul and the life cycle of caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly denotes life, death and resurrection. In closer historical proximity to Burchfield, the butterfly as a sign of the soul departed became a popular motif for grassroots tomb sculpture in Europe and the United States during the Greek revival of the nineteenth century.²⁴ Consequently, Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight may also be interpreted as an image of resurrection or, from a Platonic point of view, as an expression of man's inherent yearning and quest for

eternal, spiritual being. Such matters were of imminent concern to the elderly artist, who would die in 1967, and such a spiritual orientation would explain Burchfield's departure from fact in placing the event in an infinite expanse of silvery, moonlit heavens.

In the course of his late period and especially during the last decade of his life, Charles Burchfield's painted transformations come to rely less and less on the anthropomorphic redefinition of nature witnessed in such early works as Starlit Woods. The motif-conventions lose their human reference and function as iconic emblems of natural features, with occasional, explicitly religious overtones. The subjects no longer refer exclusively to particularized incidents nor inventory the varieties of plant and animal species belonging to a specific locale and season. The views become symbolic landscapes of cosmic magnitude and feature credible, but pared-down syntheses of details. Carefully chosen for their symbolic evocations, these edited images of nature probe beneath external appearances in search of ultimate meanings and imply a merging of self with the natural order to that end.

Exemplary of this transcendent expression, *Migration of Butterflies by Moonlight* presents an apocalyptic moment of vitalist insight, of religious revelation, when nature sheds its everyday material being to disclose the pulsing substance of its life force, when spirit departs from its earthly abode to return to its divine, heavenly origin. Testifying to an experience of visionary wisdom, the Elvehjem watercolor conveys that universal intuition of life as fragile, transient yet enduring, pungent yet elusive, habitual yet miraculous. This poignant contradiction that is life assailed Charles Burchfield once again when, on a summer's night in his mind's eye, Monarch butterflies guided by the benevolent specter of silver moon beams, filled the fragrant air above a lush, blooming meadow with the graceful ritual of their seasonal migration.

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Footnotes

1. Quoted in John I. H. Baur, *Charles Burchfield* (New York: Published for the Whitney Museum of American Art by Macmillan, 1956), p. 61.

2. The watercolor was presented to the Museum in 1980 by Mr. and Mrs. Newman T. Halvorson on the occasion of the Museum's tenth anniversary. It was previously shown at the Elvehjem as part of the inaugural exhibition in 1970.

3. Roderick Nash, Errand into Wilderness (rev. ed.; New Haven: Yale, 1977), p. xv.

 Robert Michael Pyle, The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Butterflies (New York: Knopf, 1981), pp. 711-12.

5. Charles Burchfield, *Journals*, February 11, 1915. Quoted in Nancy Ketchiff, "The Invisible Made Visible: Sound Imagery in the Early Watercolors of Charles Burchfield" (Ph.D. thesis, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1977), p. 16.

6. Numbering about twenty, these motifs represent a range of predominantly gloomy moods such as Fear, Morbidness, Dangerous Brooding, Insanity, Menace and Fascination of Evil. In her study, Nancy Ketchiff evaluated Charles Burchfield's use of conventions of abstract form to give visible form to unseen, evocative aspects of his encounters with nature, namely, to sounds and his emotional responses. She related these aspects of his landscapes to the general interest among the arts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in synaesthesia and argues that Burchfield's formal conventions are indebted to theosophic ideas set forth in Charles W. Leadbeater's and Annie Besant's *Thought-Forms* of 1905.

7. Baur, p. 31.

8. "Thoughts on an 'Artist's Viewpoint," in Lee Nordness and Allen S. Weller, eds., Art U.S.A. Now (New York: Viking, 1963), Vol. I, p. 64.

9. Quoted in Baur, p. 25.

10. Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, authorized trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York: Holt, 1911). For a more detailed account of Bergson's popularity in the United States during these years and his first visit to this country in 1913, see Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence* (New York: Knopf, 1959), p. 228.

11. Baur, p. 19. Matthew Baigell also discussed the influence of Burroughs in his monograph, *Charles Burchfield* (New York: Watson-Guptill, 1976), pp. 25-31.

12. John Burroughs, The Breath of Life (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1915).

13. For example, Burroughs wrote an essay tribute, "A Prophet of the Soul," first published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in January 1913, and then reprinted in his book *Under the Apple-Trees* (1916). The naturalist here emphasized the appeal of Bergson's thought for the creatively inclined artist, poet, or writer.

14. Bergson, Creative Evolution, p. 26.

15. Idem.

16. Ibid., p. 266.

- 17. Ibid., p. 269.
- 18. Ibid., p. 257.
- 19. Ibid., p. 165.
- 20. Ibid., pp. 237-38.

21. Henri Bergson, Laughter; an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, authorized trans. Cloudesley, Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911), pp. 156, 160.

22. Journals, 1954, quoted in Baur, p. 11.

23. For a brief summary on the symbolism associated with the butterfly, see Jo Brewer and Kjell B. Sandved, *Butterflies* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1976), pp. 41-54. See also Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough; a Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), Vol. III, pp. 29, 41, and 51; and Vol. VIII, pp. 290, 291, and 296; Kenneth Clark, intro., *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York: Harper and Row Icon Editions, 1974), p. 54.

24. Of particular interest here is the example of an American tombstone which utlizes a Monarch butterfly and which is reproduced in Brewer and Sandved, *Butterflies*, pp. 46-47. One wonders whether Burchfield's choice is merely coincidental, given the almost universally recognized association, or whether such a specific source might in fact have inspired the artist. The issue would require further research in both areas.

Andrew Wyeth's *Birch Brush* of 1972 at first glance seems quite commonplace in subject matter. A pile of birch brush rest precariously upon a large stone behind which stretches the dark forest interior. The brush, slightly off-center, is conveniently framed by the upright slender birches on each side; the slope of the rock pulls the viewer's eye to the brush, and the shadow of the left birch tree in turn draws his eye to the background. This deceptively simple scene, so skillfully composed exemplifies the qualities of Wyeth's work that have aroused the praise of Wyeth's worshippers on the one hand, and the censor of modernist critics who begrudge his popularity, on the other.

As Susan B. Meyer points out in "Random Thoughts on the Most Famous Painter in America," both groups appear to be reacting to the most literal features of Wyeth's work, "his realism, his dazzling technique, and rural subjects erroneously labeled 'nostalgic.'" According to Meyer:

If the worshippers looked beneath the surface, their faith might well be shaken; likewise, the critics just might discover that they too, had been misled by Wyeth's pyrotechnics.¹

This preoccupation with "pyrotechnics" has thus caused admirers and critics to overlook key issues of Wyeth's art, issues which raise his painting above the level of the "commonplace" or "nostalgic" to one with more profound implications. Indeed, as Meyer stresses, "Wyeth's art is far more complex than either group . . . wants to acknowledge" for ironically Wyeth views himself as a progressive artist of the twentieth century: "I think today the abstractionists are the conservatives and I'm the modernist."² To Wyeth, the "abstractionist" artists avoid the challenge that reality presents:

The abstractionists obliterate the object because it's one way of escaping perfunctory picturesqueness. Then it's easier because you don't have that goddam thing of subject matter, an object standing in your way. You've just got color and mood. But I'd never be satisfied with that. Why can't we have reality too, so we can understand it? Does it have to be gibberish?³

Wyeth sees his genius in his ability to assimilate abstract formal values into a scheme of reality. In fact, he considers

himself an abstractionist:

A lot of people say I've brought realism back—they try to tie me up with Eakins and Winslow Homer. To my mind, they are mistaken. I honestly consider myself an abstractionist. Eakins' figures actually breathe in the frame. My people, my objects, breathe in a different way; there's another core—an excitement that's definitely abstract.⁴

The nature of Wyeth's realism is also raised by Wanda Corn who questions whether Wyeth continues the landscape traditions of nineteenth-century art or is a selfappointed twentieth-century "realist" interpreting what remains of pastoral America. In her study of the artist, Corn finally resolves:

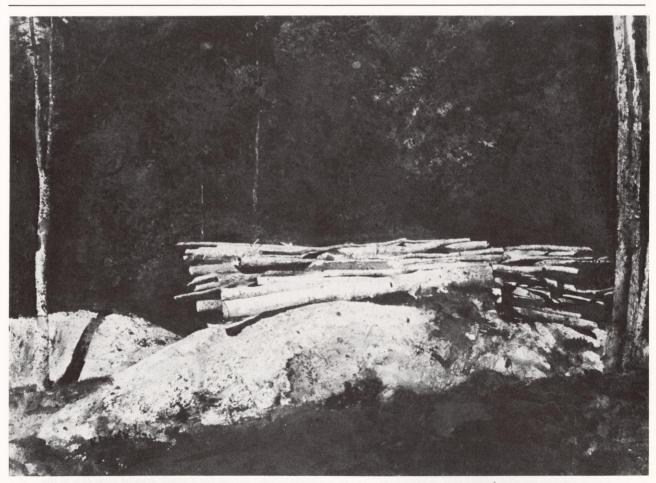
Perhaps it is entirely misleading to call an artist a 'realist' who, time and time again, is drawn to the same models, the same farms and weathered houses, and to the same blighted seasons of the year.⁵

Wyeth's painting, Corn continues, must be understood within the framework of his "psychic universe," one consisting of the artist's personal associations with the object and the universal metaphors he creates. As Wyeth himself writes:

You have to peer beneath the surface. The commonplace is the thing, but it's hard to find. Then, if you believe in it, have a love for it, this specific thing will become a universal.⁶

This statement echoes the words of Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*. Also present in spirit is the modern poet Robert Frost. In his poem *For Once, Then, Something,* Frost looks into a well, through his reflection and sees a white and yet uncertain shape. He thinks it may be the truth or just a quartz pebble, but concludes that at least, for once, it is something. Wyeth, it is known, was brought up by his father on the writings of Frost, Whitman, and Thoreau. As an adult he made frequent voyages to Walden Pond and considered Thoreau the "springhead for almost every move I can make, except in the intimate matters that transpire between a man and a woman."⁷

Wyeth's Birch Brush consequently acquires both a deeper and broader significance when seen in relationship to the



Andrew Wyeth, Birch Brush, 1972, dry brush watercolor on paper, 22"H., 30"W., Elvehjem Museum of Art. Gift of William Beverly Murphy.

literature admired by the artist. Comparison with earlier nineteenth-century American painting as well as that of the twentieth century will likewise show him to be a product of a vision linking two centuries of art.

Birch Brush is a combination of two techniques, watercolor and drybrush. This combination allows the artist the freedom of the fluid watercolor medium countered by the restraint of drawing in drybrush. Likewise, Wyeth states that although he is emotional, he is also a calm mathematician. He chooses tempera because it is a "dull medium" whose minute strokes "put a break" on his real messiness. The "wild" side comes out in his watercolors.⁸ In his combination of dry-brush and wet watercolor in *Birch Brush*, the foreground appears more detailed and controlled while the background remains scumbled and freer. Such combinations of painting techniques appear throughout Wyeth's art, the artist often using simultaneously in one painting a disciplined, drawing-like style alongside a loose, quick, painterly touch.

This juxtaposition of differing manners recalls works by Thomas Eakins, who likewise combines cool mathematical precision with painterly freedom. Barbara Novak observes that in Eakins' *Max Schmitt in a Single Scull* certain sections such as the lefthand trees, having a lighter and more spontaneous stroke, seem to be painted on the spot, whereas, in other sections, in particular the figure of Schmitt, the sharp focus and tight rendering suggest a studio portrait.⁹ In discussing his working method, Eakins anticipates Wyeth's statement about combining the emotional with the cool and mathematical.

In a big picture you can see what o'clock it is, afternoon or morning, if it's hot or cold, winter or summer and what kind of people are there . . . but at the very first combination no man, and least of all himself, could ever disentangle the feelings that animated him just then, and refer each one to its right place.¹⁰

Thus, the rather widespread criticism that Wyeth is too literal, too "photographic," should certainly be questioned for its lack of discernment, lack of true examination of the painter's working method. Indeed, *Birch Brush* is anything but painstakingly detailed and the viewer is hard-pressed to see the "every blade of grass" exactitude mistakenly associated with Wyeth's art. In contrast to the "objective truth to nature" approach found in such works as Asher B. Durand's *Study from Nature: Rocks and Trees* from the mid-1850s, Wyeth's approach is one which subjectively arranges nature. In *Rocks and Trees* Durand paints a literal transcription of nature which, in his own words, forms "a beautiful composition without need of change or adaption."¹¹ Wyeth's painting, on the other hand, is "interpretive," as the composition is imposed upon nature to reveal the hand of the artist. Like Eakins and Homer, Wyeth uses tangible reality as a point of departure toward a "romantic" realism, or "pictorial fiction."¹² Jay Jacobs points out in "Andrew Wyeth—An Unsentimental Appraisal" that:

Wyeth's method of recreating visual phenomena is steeped in subjectivity, all manner of non-visual associations and even tactile investigation . . . Wyeth's style is linear and literary. It also leans heavily on a use of texture that again, has nothing whatever to do with the processes of visual perception.¹³

Jacobs alludes to Young America as an example of a Wyeth painting where the textures of a bicycle and the grass appear to be the same. Similarly, in the Elvehjem's picture one cannot, in viewing isolated passages identify the objects by texture. As in paintings by Eakins, Homer, and Hopper, objects in a Wyeth painting differ only in their contour, placement and tone. Wyeth experiments with abstract values of light and dark and uses reality to construct formal patterns. At its most basic Birch Brush consists of a light foreground set of objects or shapes placed against a darker mysterious background. Not brilliant in color, the forest is painted in grays and browns throughout, except for a small area of blue sky in the upper left and a patch of green on the large rock. The painting's richness of surface is thus achieved through the tonal contrasts, of the brightly lit rock, the birch brush, and the silver birches with the shadowy forest interior. Like Hopper in his famous Nighthawks, Wyeth creates a sense of mystery in the surrounding shaded areas that sink into a black darkness. In agreement with a Hopper pronouncement, Wyeth's goal is to make "the most exact transcription possible of my most intimate impressions of nature."14

Critics of Wyeth contend that he is unoriginal, nonprogressive, and consequently not worthy of widespread admiration. To Jay Jacobs, "Wyeth ... has neither advanced nor impeded the course of art in his time. He is an anachronistic loner who gets in nobody's way."15 To Brian O'Doherty, "his work is in the same impeccable area as the Fourth of July and Mother's Day."16 Neither recognizes the personal vision and associations, the romantic dreams, and the symbolic suggestions underlying Wyeth's construction of nature. Like Homer in his 1880 sea paintings or Hopper in his New York street scenes, Wyeth not only registers his own feelings, but strives for a universal statement. In his article "Before the Squalor," Alfred Werner suggests that twentieth-century artists of nature such as Wyeth "have become painfully aware of the threat that every meadow, brook and wood will soon disappear . . . they feel, rightly or wrongly, that these dangerous trends are echoed by much in contemporary art that leaves us so emotionally dissatisfied."17

Accused of painting cold, distant pictures, Wyeth sees himself as both romantic and rational, having "a romantic fantasy about things" and at the same time "backing up his dreams with truth." Wyeth's painting, *Birch Brush*, like Frost's poem *The Wood Pile*, conveys a metaphysical message. The artist's depiction of a pile of birch as the deserted handiwork of man mirrors Frost's ultimate speculation about man:

... I thought only

Someone who lived in turning to fresh tasks, Could so forget his handiwork on which He spent himself, the labour of his axe, And leave it there far from a useful fireplace To warm the frozen swamp as best it could With the slow amelolase huming of the

With the slow smokeless burning of decay.18

Thus, like Frost and Thoreau, Wyeth has a love for the specific, and believes in it so intensely that he transforms it into a universal phenomenon with philosophical implications. The intensification of a tangible object results in a kind of "charged space." As with a Luminist landscape by Martin J. Heade, a rowing painting by

Eakins, or a city street by Hopper, empty foreground space, carefully measured and exact, results in the feeling that time and motion have stopped. Even if the viewer does not understand the artist's personal, philosophical or psychological associations with his subject, the viewer can nevertheless respond to the charged tone of Wyeth's psychic universe. Critic Susan Meyer explains:

Subtle and disturbing, Wyeth's paintings express an almost frightening tension between what is picturesque and what is actually grotesque. A chilling and forbidding atmosphere permeates his deceptively pretty scenes.¹⁹

Although the meaning of Wyeth's imagery in *Birch Brush* may not be explicit, the viewer might, and indeed, should ponder whether the birch wood, cut and stacked in the forest, as a symbol of man's handiwork, ultimately embodies philosophic questions about his relation to nature. Is Wyeth consciously creating a metaphysical metaphor by his placement of the dead brush between the standing live birch trees? Furthermore, is it so out of line with Wyeth's own expressed search for the universal to interpret this pile of wood, man's handiwork, as a symbol of the handiwork of the artist—the painting itself?

Such speculations, though unresolved, point to the truly complex nature of Wyeth's art. As an artist linking nineteenth-century landscape traditions with twentiethcentury preoccupations with form and preservation of the pastoral, Wyeth emerges as an artist with a broader and more profound vision than either his critics or admirers have perceived. "Peering through the surface" of Wyeth's "pyrotechnics" and "realistic" subject matter, the viewer will discover "universal meaning" which raises his art above the level of the commonplace.

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Footnotes

1. Susan B. Meyer, "Random Thoughts on the Most Famous Painter in America," American Artist, 41 (February 1977), p. 6.

2. As quoted by Wanda M. Corn, *The Art of Andrew Wyeth* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society Ltd., 1973), p. 78.

3. Ibid., p. 69.

4. Ibid., p. 45.

5. Corn, p. 97.

6. As quoted in Corn, pp. 102-03.

7. Ibid., p. 123.

8. Corn, p. 55.

9. Barbara Novak, American Painting of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Praeger, 1974), p. 193.

10. As quoted by Novak, p. 192.

11. Ibid., p. 87.

12. Novak uses the term "pictorial fiction" to describe the psychological tensions of Homer's 1870 painting *High Tide: The Bathers*, p. 178.

13. Jay Jacobs, "Andrew Wyeth-An Unsentimental Reappraisal," Art in America, 55 (January 1967), p. 28.

14. As quoted by Barbara Rose, American Art Since 1900 (New York: Praeger, 1975), p. 103.

15. Jacobs, pp. 30-31.

16. As quoted by Jacobs, p. 31.

17. Alfred Werner, "Before the Squalor," Art and Artists, 11 (February 1977), p. 13.

18. Robert Frost's Poems, ed. Louis Untermeyer (New York: Washington Square Press, 1971), p. 127.

19. Meyer, p. 6.

he loan from the Munch Museum in Oslo of Edvard Munch's The Sick Child (1927, Fig. 1) and Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand (1904-05, Fig. 7) for a period of six months each in the spring and fall of 1980 introduced Madison to three, rather than just two, different stages of the artist's career. Although the theme and composition of The Sick Child are derived from his first conception of the subject during the earliest phase of his activity in 1885-86 (Fig. 2), the work's brilliant coloring and painterly vigor show it to be a forceful major product of a highly fertile period of almost four decades later. Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand, on the other hand, a subject the artist treated chiefly between 1902 and 1905, typifies his practice in the early 1900s. Despite their differences of subject and style, the two paintings demonstrate the continuity of Munch's life-long attempt to transform personal experiences and feelings into more general allegorical statements, and in fact were both intended to form part of the collective monumental grouping of paintings on basic themes of life that he called his "Frieze of Life."¹ As later versions of works first conceived at an earlier date, they invite an examination of the reasons for the artist's continued preoccupation with certain subjects; as representations of children, they also draw attention to his special attraction to the child as a complex vehicle of feeling. Finally, as works exactly contemporary with many of those included in the great exhibition of Munch's Expressionist paintings shown in Madison in the fall of 1982 (which brought The Sick Child back a second time),² they provide an excellent introduction to the nature of his invention after 1900.

Ι

In his first version of *The Sick Child* (1885-86, Fig. 2), a work generally agreed to be one of the most important of his entire career, the young Munch attempted to render his vivid recollection of the death of his fifteen-year-old sister Sophie in 1877. As he remembered this in a subsequent letter that described the scene: "[Sophie's] eyes became red—I could not believe that death was so inevitable, so near at hand ... Was she really going to die? In the final hour she felt much more comfortable, the pains had gone.

She tried to get up and pointed to the armchair by the side of her bed. 'I would so like to sit up,' she whispered. How strange she felt—the room was different—it was as though she were seeing it through a veil—her body seemed to be weighted down with lead—she was so tired.''³ Though he took the subject from his own experience and precisely remembered many of its details, he avoided giving his figures—modelled after a young neighbor and his aunt—a specific, portrait-like resemblance. Instead, he generalized them and the entire setting in order to present a universal, rather than just personal or anecdotal, theme.

Munch's conception of his subject was influenced by a modern tradition of representing the harsh realities of tuberculosis, sickness, and death that had involved many of his Norwegian Naturalist predecessors in the late 1870s and 1880s. He himself referred to the frequency with which subjects of dying children in bed were treated at that time by speaking of it as the "pillow period," and acknowledged that he was influenced by Naturalists such as Hans Heyerdahl and his own teacher, Christian Krohg.⁴ In fact, he specifically recalls Krohg's Sick Child (1880-81, Fig. 3)—a work included in the Elvehjem's The Art of Norway exhibition of 1978-795-in his similarly close and direct confrontation of the viewer with a young girl who has been claimed by tuberculosis. Yet he significantly departs from Krohg's Naturalism, with its blatant symbolism of a dying rose and blood-red decoration of the blanket, in order to render a more indeterminate sensation, presenting his sister as perceived through the dense, psychological veil or haze through which he felt she had seen her last moments and through which he himself subjectively saw and remembered them.⁶ Rather than Krohg's precise Naturalism he used a more impetuous and rough mode to animate the entire substance of the figures and their surroundings.

In this and the numerous subsequent versions of the subject Munch gave special emphasis to the longing and somewhat remote gaze of the child, who appears as if she suddenly has found comfort and release from her sufferings at the moment of death. By forcefully contrasting her illuminated face and upright pose to the



Fig. 1 Edvard Munch, The Sick Child, 1927 (signed and dated 1926), oil on canvas, 46 1/16"H., 45 5/8"W., Munch Museum, Oslo.

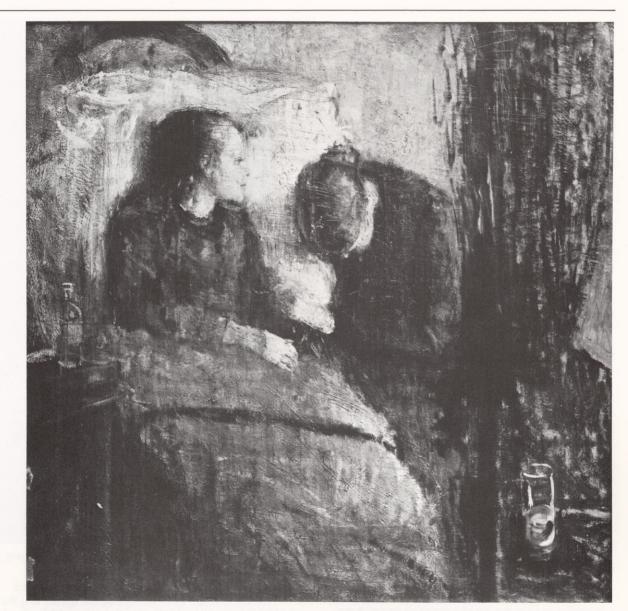


Fig. 2 Edvard Munch, The Sick Child, 1885-86 (reworked 1892), oil on canvas, 47"H., 46 5/8"W., National Gallery, Oslo.

darkened and bowed attitude of the woman, he further expanded the subject to represent the despair and the guilt mothers had to feel both for outliving their children and for possibly having transmitted tuberculosis, still considered at that time a hereditary disease.

Whereas the figures' open and closed attitudes are contrasted, they are also forcefully joined into a single, centralized, and curving unit that is further reinforced by the more regular curve of the chair back and by further organizing lines in the pillow and blanket. Munch himself later stressed the importance of his firm, geometric organization of the subject in writing that "The Sick Child ... is constructed on horizontal and vertical lines as well as on converging, diagonal strokes."7 This quiet yet direct way of expressing his meaning through simplified, cubically rendered figures and through a pronounced emphasis on tonal and atmospheric effects may have been partially influenced by the late works of Rembrandt Munch had recently studied on his first trip to Paris,8 paintings whose deep subjectivity had begun to attract considerable new attention in the late 1880s and 1890s.9 At the same time, however, his greatly flattened space and composition and simplified means of painting also demonstrate his more immediate orientation towards the new stylistic interests of Krohg and other modernists. Moreover, the unprettified subjects of *The Sick Child* and many of his other works show that however much he felt he had rejected Naturalism, he nonetheless continued to be inspired by its moral, social, and spiritual imperatives.

Munch repeatedly reworked the first version of *The Sick Child*, alternately applying and scraping away pigment with the palette knife and scoring the paint with the stick end of the brush in an attempt to realize the heavy atmosphere of a sickroom perceived through a nervously charged veil. Whereas Krohg produced an image of bright and clear accuracy, he produced a surface that was deliberately messy, scratched, and aged after more than a year's work. He himself considered the painting unfinished and showed it under the title of *Study* when he first exhibited it in Oslo in 1886; by that time he felt it was more important to show his new expressive discoveries



Fig. 3 Christian Krohg, Sick Child, 1880-81, oil on wood, 40 1/8"H., 22 13/16"W., National Gallery, Oslo.

than to exhibit a more conventionally finished work. Though he might have anticipated the uproar that the work's willfully unfinished appearance would cause, he seems to have underestimated the amount of harsh criticism it would draw; he soon grew remorseful over having shown the work in that state, and subsequently reworked part of its surface.¹⁰ Yet he ultimately grew proud of the painting's "violent and intense" power,¹¹ and saw it as one of the most important of his oeuvre: "In *The Sick Child* I broke new ground, it was a breakthrough in my art. Most of what I have later done had its basis in that painting."¹²



Fig. 4 Edvard Munch, *The Sick Child*, 1894, etching, drypoint and roulette, 18 15/16"H., 13 9/16"W., Elvehjem Museum of Art. Frank J. Sensenbrenner Trust Fund purchase. In 1896 and 1907, at almost equal, ten-year intervals, Munch produced the first three of five later oil versions of The Sick Child, in each case rendering the subject in a more flowing manner that used the brush more than the palette knife.¹³ His intention in making these later versions was not just to copy the first one, but to explore its coloristic potential more fully. In the second oil version of 1896 (Konstmuseum, Gothenburg, Sweden), for instance, made at a private patron's request for a copy of the first, Munch painted more freely and confidently than he had ten years earlier and, while retaining a similar tonality, introduced several stronger hues to give the subject more substance.¹⁴ He also intensified the linear aspect of the painting, especially in his rendering of prominent cross-hatching over most areas of the composition, to enhance the sensation of the enveloping veil.¹⁵ This quality became even more pronounced in the third and fourth versions, both of the summer of 1907, through the use of a more energetic and aggressive manner of applying paint in wide, predominantly vertical, and nervously fluid strokes such as he was currently employing in his major new subjects of Amor and Psyche, 1907 (Munch Museum, Oslo), Men Bathing, 1907 (Art Museum of the Atheneum, Helsinki), and Death of Marat, 1905-08 (Munch Museum, Oslo). The fourth version of The Sick Child of 1907 (Fig. 5) thus acquired a striking new flickering aspect through the artist's use of a combination of long and short, jarringly repetitive, vertical strokes and through his introduction of the much brighter, complementary hues of red and green and orange and blue, which vibrate through their simple juxtaposition.¹⁶ Both the colors and his tight and dense brushwork thus become powerful physical manifestations of the room's sickly and stagnant air.

When Munch painted the last two (fifth and sixth) oil versions of *The Sick Child* in the 1920s, the sixth being the painting exhibited in Madison on the two occasions mentioned earlier (Fig. 1), his immediate point of departure was the fourth version of 1907, the only one remaining in his personal collection. In 1926 he temporarily lent that work to the major retrospective of his work being organized for Berlin and Oslo and, at the time of the exhibition's showing in Oslo in 1927, painted the sixth



Fig. 5 Edvard Munch, The Sick Child, 1907, oil on canvas, 46 7/8"H., 47 5/8"W., The Tate Gallery, London.

version.¹⁷ During the later 1910s and 1920s, as he lived largely in the isolation of his home in Ekely, Norway, the artist frequently reminisced about his past and renewed his involvement with subjects that had attracted him in his youth, something that was vividly demonstrated in the Elvehjem exhibition of paintings from the Munch Museum, such as *Death of the Bohemian*, 1918, *The Artist and His Model*, *I*, 1919-21, and *The Bohemian Wedding*, *I*, 1925.¹⁸ This tendency to recall his earlier subjects, freshly stimulated by the retrospective and by the more immediate need to make another replica of a work temporarily removed from the Frieze of Life, was probably a chief reason for his returning to *The Sick Child* at that time.

Unlike the young artist, who had attained the rough beauty of his first version by working through the intense doubt and struggle of more than a year's work, the mature Munch—a man then in his sixties—was a considerably more extroverted and spontaneous painter. In the fifth and sixth versions—the brightest and most colorful of the group—he further elaborated upon the nervously repetitive, vibrating, and striped treatment of the surface that he had developed in the versions of 1907, but now used the more highly saturated hues and loose manner of painting that he had come to prefer in the 1920s.

In these two later versions he did even more to augment the subject's animate veiled appearance, especially by strengthening complementary contrast in much larger areas of orange/blue and green/red, and by introducing considerable amounts of violet and its complementary, vellow, to generate a whole new feeling of light and mysterious palpitation. In these paintings coloristic detail and brushwork are more highly charged and have a more important pictorial role than earlier. As in the previous versions, for instance, Munch made the detail of swirling orange, blue, and green strokes on the bedside table echo and amplify the pattern of color, light, and shadow in the child's orange hair. In the sixth version, however, the newly bright and lively color of the table is no longer subordinated to the rest of the composition; like the dynamic brushwork on the pillow and the loosely brushed cross-hatching in the upper part of the canvas's right side,

it has become a more active, almost combustible element that bursts from dark surroundings. The greater richness and resonance of The Sick Child of 1927 is particularly evident in the vivid mixture of violet, blue, and green with strokes of red, orange, and yellow on the bottom part of the girl's blanket next to the table, and in the introduction of small flames of yellow that gradually ascend towards a larger one applied straight from the tube at the upper left corner.¹⁹ The orange is more highly saturated than in the earlier versions, and is prominent throughout the painting in the flame-like touches on the pillow to the left of the girl and above the mother's head; in the rising, insubstantial orange area extending to the right of the girl's forehead; in the contours of the mother's hands, neck, and face; and in other flat areas of the table, hair, and glass. The figures themselves are more firmly and solidly defined by contours and thus are substantially more weighty than in the earlier versions. The artist's brushstrokes are broader, looser, and less closely packed together than those in the versions of 1907, and the thin scratches were for the most part drawn quickly in wet paint. Instead of appearing attacked or mauled as had the surface of the first version, that of the final version is radiant and blazing.

Munch's lifelong practice of producing several versions of his subjects in different media reflects not only his fascination with artistic process but also his desire to remain in contact with those subjects that seemed most vital to his personal and artistic development. Although two of the five later oil versions of The Sick Child were produced on commission, the consistency of his return to the subject at especially introspective periods of his life suggests that he was motivated as much by personal reasons as by practical needs to make a copy for a patron or fill a gap in his Frieze of Life or by purely formal interests. Since the versions of 1896 and 1927, for instance, followed by less than a year the deaths of his brother, Peter Andreas, and of his sister, Laura, it seems possible that he chose to repeat the subject partly to commemorate those recent family losses. That he returned to the subject in the summer of 1907, a period of extreme anxiety in

which he focused on the most elemental themes of life, and that he made two replicas of the work in close succession both during that summer and again in the mid 1920s, also would make it seem that he did so to fulfill both personal and artistic needs. Finally, the almost equal, ten-year intervals at which he produced the first three later versions in 1896 and 1907 suggest the further possibility that he might have returned to the subject partly to observe and assess his own growth.

Munch himself recognized that he had given the final version fresh vitality and interest when he later spoke of its "simple and primitive power."²⁰ In making his first depiction of the subject he had markedly departed from Krohg's Naturalist characterization of a cruel contemporary urban plight attacking from outside in order to convey the disease's physical and psychological crippling from within. In moving from the first to the sixth version of *The Sick Child* the artist well-known for representing himself and acquaintances in hell or literally burning with inner heat²¹ let an initial expression of raw, unshaped, and smoldering grief catch fire.

Π

Munch spent the greater part of the years from 1892-95 and again from 1902-07 in Germany, but like most of his Norwegian predecessors and contemporaries who similarly found it necessary to work and live abroad, returned to his own country regularly for a spring or summer sojourn. In the 1890s he began frequenting Aasgaardstrand, a small fishing village on the Oslo Fjord that had become a popular retreat for artists and writers and it was there, during the summer of 1902, that he produced the first version of Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand, a painting now in the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart (Fig. 8). The version of 1904-05 exhibited in Madison in 1980 (Fig. 7) is the first of two similar, more colorful later versions owned by the Munch Museum that were probably executed during the artist's vacations at Aasgaardstrand in 1904 and 1905.22 As Peter Krieger has noted, Munch seems to have made these later versions with the intention of including them in his Frieze of Life, and later depicted the subject in the Frieze

of Life mural that he executed for the Freia Chocolate Factory in Oslo in 1922.²³

Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand is thus a work of the first decade of the century, a period the artist later called the most unhappy and difficult, but also the most productive, of his career.²⁴ At that time he was finally beginning to enjoy substantial popular success in Germany and received a number of important commissions and exhibitions;25 during those same years, however, he increasingly aggravated his physical and mental health by his ceaseless work, stormy personal relations, heavy drinking, and continuous changes of residence. Shortly after finishing the first version of Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand in 1902, for instance, he was thrown into a state of utter despondency after the traumatic quarrel with Tulla Larson in which he accidentally shot off part of a finger.²⁶ In the following years, although he was well cared for and encouraged by his friends and new patrons, Munch continued to live in the same difficult way that ultimately led to his major breakdown in 1908.



Fig. 6 Fritz von Uhde, Nursery, 1889, oil on canvas, 43 9/16"H., 54 1/2"W., Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

Ragna Stang has noted how in the works of that decade the artist seemed to gravitate between two thematic extremes,²⁷ a dichotomy exhibited in rich variety in the 1982 Munch exhibition in Madison. In some paintings, such as Death of Marat, 1907, Drinking Bout, 1906, Desire, 1907, Jealousy, 1907, and The Murderer, 1910,²⁸ the artist preoccupied himself with subjects of violence and extreme emotion as he furiously relived and exaggerated dramas of the battle between the sexes in which he found correspondences to his own life. In others, such as the central panel of his Bathers triptych, 1907-09 (Munch Museum, Oslo), Fertility, 1898 (private collection), and numerous animated landscapes such as the Winter Landscape, Elgersburg, 1906 (Munch Museum, Oslo), he depicted subjects that were more positively vital-if nonetheless nervous-as if he thought that by treating such subjects he might recuperate the virile strengths he then felt escaping him. The content of Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand and numerous other paintings of children executed in this period, including the Two Little Girls with Blue Aprons, 1904-05 (Munch Museum, Oslo) and Young People and Ducks, 1905 (Munch Museum, Oslo) lies somewhere between these two extremes.

Munch certainly was attracted to the youthful qualities of his Aasgaardstrand subjects, natives of the small town said to have received him with interest and affection.²⁹ Yet the girls' appearance also stimulated him to muse on the way their natural energies were in part checked in the course of their social conditioning. He did not represent just a moment of childhood, therefore, but a more general allegory of growth.

In the first version (Fig. 8) he rendered faces in specific, almost portrait-like detail, suggesting that he developed this work by working directly from models. In order to present his allegorical theme, however, he made notable departures from usual conventions of portraying children. Unlike the warmly informal, open compositions of children playing with toys in interiors that both he³⁰ and contemporaries such as the German, Fritz von Uhde, had employed in the 1880s and 1890s (Fig. 6), Munch in this work adopted a more formal order. The four frontally viewed village girls—more awkward and tough than the delicate middle-class city children in his earlier commissioned portraits—are strung out across the surface in a flattened composition that lacks a main focus, an arrangement that might have been stimulated partly by formal alignments characteristically found in provincial photographs of groups and families.³¹ As he proceeded from the first to the later versions he raised the level of the white foundation wall behind the children in order to frame and define the subject more emphatically. The drab brown-and-white coloring of the house, the bare trees in the background, the amorphous, dark green of the grass, and the children's warm clothing indicate that they were portrayed in the cold weather of early spring.

Even if the children had aligned themselves in such a way of their own accord (as grown-ups they remembered having been permitted to visit the artist only in groups of two or more),³² it is clear that Munch deliberately chose this arrangement to emphasize their differences of age and sensibility. Their ages are distinguished both by the steplike progression of their heights and by features of their dress and bearing. The youngest is rendered as the most awkward and unformed of the four. In the version of 1902 (Stuttgart) she is shown wearing an older sister's coat that is much too long for her; in the version exhibited in Madison (Fig. 7) she wears a better-fitting small coat and the hem of her skirt is more nearly even with those of the others, but she is characterized as being considerably less steady in stance than the more poised older girls, an appearance further reinforced by the way the oldest sister takes hold of her hand. The youngest girl's budding energies are also suggested in the gently throbbing contours of her body, and are made even more pronounced by her being emphatically silhouetted against the wall, in which the impression of youth literally brimming with vital forces is echoed in stone patterns that resemble animate, biomorphic forms and swell around her. Unlike the dull colors of the clothes of her sisters, the intense hues of her clothing are among the strongest in the work; the artist thus emphasizes the affinity of her youth with that of the primal, gathering forces of nature in the comparably dense and lively green of the grass.



Fig. 7 Edvard Munch, Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand, 1904-05, oil on canvas, 34 1/4"H., 43 11/16"W., Munch Museum, Oslo.



Fig. 8 Edvard Munch, Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand, 1902, oil on canvas, 35 1/4"H., 49 1/4"W., Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

As he progressed from the first to the later versions Munch made other changes in the girls' dress, and especially in their hats, to accentuate their differences to an even greater extent. In the Stuttgart painting the two oldest girls at each end of the group wear the same type of many-pointed hat, but their ways of wearing their hats reveal other traits that are developed further in the subsequent versions. The hat of the tallest girl rises firmly on the back of her head, reinforcing her frontal attitude. This, coupled with the way her hair is sensibly pulled back and the way in which she takes charge of the youngest, shows her to be the most responsible, practical, and domestic of the group. In the next two versions she is given larger, more unwieldy, and more assertively horizontal hats, which, along with her set and sullen expression, suggests her none-too-certain authority over the others. The next oldest girl at the right end of the group, on the other hand, is depicted from the beginning as a more sensuous type with rounded cheeks and blond hair that is still allowed to flow as freely as that of the younger girls at her side. Her hat, worn more jauntily and further back on her head, characterizes her as being less restrained than her older sister, although in the subsequent versions she too is rendered with more serious expressions.

Unlike the figures seen through an atmospheric veil in an interior in The Sick Child, the girls at Aasgaardstrand were shown in a clear and raw outdoor light rendered in the flat colored areas of the house and landscape; by that time the artist had ceased using the atmospheric modes he had employed in works of the 1880s and 1890s in order to paint more with large, generalized, flat, and loosely worked areas of color bound by curving contours.³³ The coloring in the Stuttgart painting is the most subdued and cold of the three, with stronger color used only in the green of the grass and in smaller red and blue highlights on the ground and wall. Munch introduced more varied and much stronger hues in the version shown in Madison not only in the blues and white of the youngest girl's clothing, but also in the bright orange of the two youngest girls' hair; in a small, rich area of violet between the two girls on the right; in the red banding of the oldest child's dress; and in the contrasting yellow, white, red, and black

of their hats. This further coloristic variation of their hats, recalling similar coloristic distinctions of figures in many of his other, more overtly allegorical representations of the different stages of life,³⁴ also helps distinguish their ages. A slightly different coloristic specification is made in the third version, in which the light pink of the summer dresses of the two children on the right is even more pointedly contrasted with the somber violet dress of the oldest, a coloring that one critic, referring also to the oldest girl's general demeanor, compared to that of sour old wine.³⁵

Here, as in his earlier representations of childhood's more dramatic and tragic moments in *The Sick Child*, *Puberty*, 1894 (National Gallery, Oslo), and *Death and the Child*, 1899-1900 (Kunsthalle, Bremen), Munch depicted children as beings who possessed psyches and a strong sense of self-awareness, and thus reflected that more enlightened sensitivity and respect for children's feelings that grew increasingly at the end of the nineteenth century. The girls at Aasgaardstrand probably initially attracted him by their youthfulness, and, as a subject outside of his own difficult emotional life, must have seemed to represent a more neutral area of experience. Yet ultimately they too were made to reflect something of his own nervous temperament.

His characterization is not gentle but pungent, a forceful mixture of the ingenuous and the experienced that is found in his finest works of the pre-World War I decade. As Ragna Stang has observed about this and his other celebrated portrayals of children, such as *Young People and Ducks* and *Max Linde's Sons*, 1903 (Behn House, Lübeck),³⁶ "Munch's great child-painting period coincided almost exactly with the most traumatic days of his life."³⁷ Attempting to come to terms with his own adult situation, he took a fresh and spirited look at its beginnings.

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Footnotes

1. On Munch's conception of the "Frieze of Life" see Reinhold Heller, *Edvard Munch: The Scream* (New York: Viking, 1973), and "Love As a Series of Paintings or a Matter of Life and Death. Edvard Munch in Berlin, 1892-1895. Epilogue, 1902," in *Edvard Munch: Symbols and Images*, exh. cat., Washington, D.C., 1978, pp. 87-109.

2. "Edvard Munch: Expressionist Paintings, 1900-1940," organized by the Elvehjem Museum of Art and the Munch Museum, Oslo. The exhibition consisted of forty-three paintings from the Munch Museum, Oslo. The exhibition catalogue, bearing the name of the exhibition, was published by the Elvehjem Museum of Art in 1982 and contains an introductory essay by Arne Eggum, Chief Curator of the Munch Museum.

3. Munch in a letter of circa 1895, quoted in Ragna Stang, Edvard Munch: The Man and His Art, trans. Geoffrey Culverwell (New York: Abbeville, 1977), p. 34.

4. Cf. also Heyerdahl's *The Dying Child* (1882, Paris, collection of the French government). Munch would seem to have acknowledged indebtedness to Krohg's influence and thanks for the latter's defense of the first version before the jury by presenting the painting to Krohg shortly after that exhibition. The two artists subsequently brought a stormy end to their friendship, and Munch thereafter tended to minimize the importance of Krohg's influence on him. He justifiably felt that he had made important departures from Krohg; he wrote Jens Thiis in the 1930s, for instance, that he thought "*The Sick Child* is diametrically opposed to Krohg—After all it is an altogether nervously constructed (cubistic) and colorless picture," quoted in Arne Eggum, "The Theme of Death," trans. Gregory P. Nybo, in *Symbols and Images*, p. 146. He also wrote Thiis that he thought he owed more to Heyerdahl than to Krohg. See Thiis, *Edvard Munch* (Berlin: Rembrandt Verlag, 1934), p. 14.

5. "The Art of Norway, 1750-1914," organized by the Elvehjem Museum of Art; catalogue bearing the same name published in 1978 by the Elvehjem Museum of Art and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

6. In the pamphlet entitled *The Genesis of the Life Frieze* (1929), quoted in Eggum, "Theme of Death," p. 147 (hereafter referred to as Eggum). Munch noted that he permitted even the accidental fluttering of his eyelashes to affect his rendering of a pattern of shadows on the subject. Eggum's article presents the fullest discussion of the painting's background and the different versions.

7. Munch in a letter to Thiis of circa 1933, quoted in Stang, p. 300.

8. Noted in Eggum, p. 149. Several scholars have noted the pertinence of Rembrandt for this and other of Munch's early works: see, for instance, Gosta Svenaeus, *Edvard Munch: Im Männlichen Gehirn I* (Lund: New Society of Letters, 1973), pp. 32-33, 232. Eggum, p. 148, is of the opinion that the artist was especially influenced by Rembrandt's self-portraits in the Louvre, but a number of figural works in Paris, such as *Christ at Emmaus* (1648), *Bathsheba with King David's Letter* (1654), and *A Scholar in a Room with a Winding Stair* (1633), also seem relevant to this and to other of Munch's early conceptions.

9. See, for instance, the discussion of Julius Langbehn's best-selling Rembrandt als Erzieher (1890) in Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair. A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology (New York: Doubleday, 1965), pp. 131-227.

10. Its reception is discussed in Eggum, p. 143 ff. As Eggum has concluded the painting's present state represents the artist's later reworking of the surface in 1892-93.

11. Munch in a note of the 1930s quoted in Eggum, p. 144.

12. Munch, The Genesis of the Life Frieze (1929), quoted in Eggum, p. 147.

13. The artist's later summary of his execution of the first three replicas in *The Genesis of the Life Frieze* (1929) is quoted in Eggum, p. 147: "I went back to it in the course of 1895 and 1906. I then succeeded in bringing out more of the stronger color I had wanted to give it. I painted three different ones. These are all dissimilar and each contributes towards bringing out what I felt in that first impression."

14. Eggum, p. 150, describes it as "just as smoldering with color as the original had been gray-upon-gray in its tonal values, implying a completely new coloristic interpretation of the motif."

15. The etched version of *The Sick Child* now owned by the Elvehjem Museum (1894) (Fig. 4) was produced only shortly before the second oil version and shows a similar, more pronounced degree of linear intensification.

16. Munch's strong colorism and especially his emphasis on complementary contrasts in works of 1906-08 reflect his experience of similar usage in the works of the French Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauves. He probably first saw works of Matisse, however, only after he had completed the third and fourth versions of *The Sick Child*; this would have been in the fall of 1907, when works by Munch and Matisse were simultaneously exhibited at the gallery of Paul Cassirer in Berlin.

17. Munch in a letter to Thiis in the early 1930s, quoted in Stang, p. 304, n. 390: "... I have painted it (during my exhibition at the National Gallery) for the fifth [actually the sixth] time. I had to have it for the 'Frieze of Life,' which is always being plundered." He did not sign or date the painting until much later, and thus probably erred when he dated it 1926.

18. Catalogue numbers 28, 31, and 37 respectively.

19. Such a treatment of color, particularly of the violet, suggests the renewed influence of Matisse, an artist whose colorism seems to have stimulated the Norwegian's initial adoption of a much brighter palette in the early 1900s, and who had been the subject of a large exhibition in Oslo in 1924 (Stang, p. 271). Because of this use of color, it would seem possible to establish the Matisse exhibition of 1924 as a *terminus post quem* for the fifth version, making that painting date closer to the sixth version of 1927, rather than in 1921, as Eggum (p. 151) has proposed. Stang (p. 273) dates the fifth version to 1926.

20. Munch in a letter to Thiis in the early 1930s quoted in Stang, p. 275.

21. See, for instance, the Self-Portrait in Hell (1903), Self-Portrait by the Window (1940), Virginia Creeper (1900), Drinking Bout (1906), and Jealously (c. 1907), all works in the Munch Museum, Oslo, that were shown in Madison in the fall of 1982.

22. Peter Krieger in Edvard Munch. Der Lebensfries für Max Reinhardts Kammerspiele, exh. cat., Berlin, 1978, pp. 75-77. Krieger also considers a fourth, somewhat different version of three girls in a pyramidal composition, *Three Girls* (Thiel Gallery, Stockholm) to have been painted in 1905.

23. Krieger, p. 75.

24. Munch in a letter to Thiis of circa 1933, quoted in Stang, p. 298 (n. 228): "All the same those years from 1902 until the Copenhagen clinic were the unhappiest, the most difficult and yet the most fateful and productive years of my life."

25. In 1902, for instance, he was invited by the artists of the Berlin Secession to mount the first major exhibition of works in his Frieze of Life, and in this and the following years he received important commissions from Max Linde, Ludwig Meyer, Ernst Thiel, Count Harry Kessler, and Max Reinhardt.

26. The most complete discussion of this episode is found in Eggum, "The Green Room," in *Edvard Munch 1863-1944*, exh. cat., Stockholm, 1977, pp. 82-88 and passim.

27. Stang in "The Aging Munch: New Creative Power," in Symbols and Images, p. 79.

28. All Munch Museum, Oslo, catalogue numbers 15, 12, 13, 11 and 18, respectively.

29. Arne Eggum spoke of the rapport Munch enjoyed with the natives of Aasgaardstrand when he visited Madison in April, 1981.

30. Cf., for instance, his *Portrait of Ludwig Meyer's Children Eli, Hakon, and Karl* (1895, private collection).

31. These conventions are characterized in Linda Nochlin, "León Fréderic and 'The Stages of the Worker's Life'," *Arts Magazine*, LV, 4 (Dec. 1980), p. 140.

32. Related by Arne Eggum.

33. This style, which he began using in the mid-1890s, was the one from which he tried to break away when he made the striped articulation of subjects in works of 1907-1908 such as the third and fourth versions of *The Sick Child* (1907). See his letter to This of circa 1933, quoted in Stang, p. 300, quotation 19: "Subsequently I painted a number of pictures with broad, distinct lines, sometimes a metre long, or with brush strokes that went vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. The surface was broken up and a kind of pre-Cubism took form. The sequence was: *Amor and Psyche, Consolation*, and *Murder.*"

34. Cf., for instance, the coloring of the women in *The Dance of Life* (1899-1900, National Gallery, Oslo).

35. Noted in Krieger, p. 76; quoted in the catalogue entry on the third version in *Edvard Munch*, exh. cat., Oslo, 1971, cat. no. 109.

36. Othmar Metzger, "Edvard Munchs 'Vier Mädchen' in der Staatsgalerie Stuttgart," Die Weltkunst, XXXVI: 24 (Dec. 15, 1956), was apparently the first to demonstrate that Max Linde's fascination with the Stuttgart version of *Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand*, which he saw in an exhibition at Cassirer's in February, 1903, led him to ask the artist to execute a portrait of his sons in a similar manner.

37. Stang, Edvard Munch, p. 188. For further discussions of this subject and its significance in Munch's oeuvre see H. Fegers, "Edvard Munch: Vier Mädchen. Neuerwerbung der Württembergischen Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart," Der Kunsthandel, XLV: 4 (Apr. 1953), pp. 11-12, and Robert Rosenblum, Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), pp. 116-17 and passim. T he Elvehjem Museum of Art Council, unlike traditional museum governing boards, is not a board and has no governing function. It is an advisory and support body, a source of perspective and encouragement for the staff, a means of relating the Museum to its users and contributors.

Eighteen members from around the state and nation are appointed by the University's Chancellor for rotating terms of four years; others are ex-officio from University administration, or represent campus faculty and students on one-year appointments. The Council meets twice annually and between meetings is kept apprised of Museum activities and progress by correspondence and by Museum news releases and publications.

Emphasized in Council thought and action during the 1978-79 year was participation in "Forward with Wisconsin," the U.W. Foundation's \$15 million capital gifts campaign which included a designation of \$600,000 for the Elvehjem. Four Council members had leadership roles in their community campaigns, and others in identifying potential givers for Foundation follow-up and contacting prospects personally. Some \$313,000 was raised for the Museum thus far.

Of continuing concern is build-up of the Elvehjem Endowment Fund, which stood in April 1979 at \$664,000, toward a \$2.5 million goal. Considering retention of endowment income to build up principal, the Council restated its endorsement of using income for acquisitions when sound purchases can be made in areas where the collection needs enrichment.

Heartening to the Council was inclusion for the first time of funding for exhibition purposes in the budget of the College of Letters and Science. The Council notes with appreciation this further evidence of interest by the Dean and Chancellor in the Museum's welfare, as expressed through numerous past grants from special University funds in support of exhibition schedules.

Joyce Jaeger Bartell, Chairman

Ex-Officio Members

Bryant E. Kearl, Vice-Chancellor
E. David Cronon, Dean of College of Letters and Science
Robert B. Rennebohm, Executive Director, U. W. Foundation
Fannie Taylor, Coordinator,

Consortium for the Performing Arts Eric S. McCready, Director, Elvehjem Museum of Art

Members-at-Large

Ineva Baldwin Joyce Jaeger Bartell, Chairman Emily Mead Baldwin Bell John A. Bolz Ellen M. Checota Margot Reid Donald Walter Frautschi Newman T. Halvorson Robert Hood R. T. Johnstone Hope Melamed Catherine Quirk Roth Schleck Carl E. Steiger Gordon R. Walker Iames S. Watrous **James Watson** Jane Werner Watson

Madison Campus Faculty and Student Members

George Bunn, Law School Frank R. Horlbeck, Department of Art History John Wilde, Department of Art Ann Boling, Graduate Student, Department of Art History

hree concerns dominated the thoughts and discussions of the Council during the year-and-onehalf under consideration. The most immediate was the search for a new director of the Museum. After the departure in July, 1979 of Director Eric McCready, the Elvehjem continued its various activities under the able leadership of Acting Director Carlton Overland. In late summer, Dean E. David Cronon of the College of Letters and Science (and thereby a member of the Council) appointed a seven-member Search-and-Screen Committee to advise him on a replacement for Mr. McCready. The Council was represented by three members of that committee: Robert Rennebohm, executive director of the U.W. Foundation; Joyce Bartell, immediate past-chairman; and Fannie Taylor (other members included Anne Lambert of the Museum staff, Professor Narciso Menocal of the Department of Art History, Professor Philip Hamilton of the Department of Art, and chairman of the committee and student-member Lynette Korenick). The committee solicited nominations and applications of candidates nationwide and, after a year long screening process, submitted its recommendations to Dean Cronon. At the last Council meeting of 1980, on November 1, the Dean introduced Katherine Harper Mead as the directordesignate, the appointment to be effective in January of 1981. In recognition of the accomplishments of former director McCready, the Council had, in October of 1979, co-sponsored a luncheon at which Mr. McCready was inducted into the Order of St. Olaf by the Norwegian Consul for Wisconsin, Byron Ostby, representing King Olav V, of Norway.

The second concern continued to be the "Forward with Wisconsin" capital campaign being conducted by the U.W. Foundation. Several Council members remained active in promoting the interests of the Elvehjem during the final stages of that major fund drive.

The third concern was the approach of the Museum's Tenth Anniversary Celebration. While the Museum staff was organizing the exhibition "Five Decades: Recent Works by Alumni of the Department of Art," the U.W. Foundation mounted a special "Tenth Anniversary Fund" drive, the proceeds from which were to be used to help acquire a major work for the permanent collection. Council members acquitted themselves handsomely in supporting the anniversary celebration, either through contributions to the special fund or through donations of other works of art (see articles elsewhere in this Bulletin). Fittingly, as the kickoff to the anniversary activities, Chancellor Irving Shain entertained at a dinner honoring Council members, past and present, for their vital role in the growth of the Elvehjem during it's first decade of existence.

It was a privilege for me to preside over the Council during such an invigorating period in the Museum's history.

Newman T. Halvorson, Chairman

Ex-Officio Members

Bryant E. Kearl, Vice-Chancellor E. David Cronon, Dean of College of Letters and Science Robert B. Rennebohm, Executive Director, U. W. Foundation Fannie Taylor, Coordinator, Consortium for the Performing Arts Carlton Overland, Acting Director, Elvehjem Museum of Art (July 1979–December 1980) Members-at-Large

Ineva Baldwin Joyce Jaeger Bartell John A. Bolz Ellen M. Checota Walter Frautschi Newman T. Halvorson, Chairman Robert Hood David J. Horsfall Hope Melamed Mrs. Frederick W. Miller Catherine Quirk Roth Schleck Gordon R. Walker **James Watson** Jane Werner Watson

Madison Campus Faculty and Student Members

George Bunn, Law School Frank R. Horlbeck, Department of Art History John Wilde, Department of Art Ann Boling, Graduate Student, Department of Art History **T** he art of Norway, China and Russia provided the focus for Education Services programming in 1978-79. Elvehjem Docents gave guided tours to 16,380 adults and children, 5,700 more than were given the previous year. This increased number can be attributed solely to the exhibition "The Art of Norway, 1750-1914." In writing about any aspect of "The Art of Norway" one is forced to use superlatives. For example, the Elvehjem offered, in a nine-week period, a series of fifty lectures, craft demonstrations and concerts in conjunction with the State Historical Society of Wisconsin's complementary exhibition of Norwegian-American furniture made in Wisconsin.

For "The Art of Norway," Education Services experimented with multi-media programming for the first time. (Several subsequent major exhibitions were also supplemented with slide programs which nearly 60,000 visitors viewed in the specially constructed small theatre.) The half-hour lunchtime talks by Docents offered for the first time for "The Art of Norway" and "The Art of Russia" exhibitions, consistently attracted attentive crowds. Another "first" was the introduction of public school children to the Elvehjem's temporary exhibitions via slide packets and curriculum materials. Over 5,000 school-age visitors had this preparation before their visits to "The Art of Norway." Docents, the mainstay of Education Services, continued to improve their tour-giving skills, freely contributing thousands of hours to the Museum. A class of nineteen Docents, trained in the fall of 1978, joined the experienced Docents. Without their whole-hearted support the public demand for tours could not have been met.

These statistics cannot begin to impart the enthusiastic response of the public, both in Madison and in surrounding communities, to the educational programming for "The Art of Norway." This phenomenal response, a regional collaboration, can best be illustrated by two examples: every school child at Yahara Elementary School in Stoughton came for a tour of "The Art of Norway" and twenty members of one Madison family used a tour of that exhibition as part of the birthday celebration for their eighty-five year-old grandfather who is of Norwegian descent. Since the Madison Metropolitan School District duplicated the preparatory slide packets of the permanent collections, Education Services was able to place one set of each in the Instructional Media Centers of thirty-two Madison schools. As a result, the Museum's permanent holdings were even more accessible to teachers and pupils. In cooperation with the College of Letters and Science and Arts Development-UW Extension, we were able to offer six Museum Short Courses during this period. In addition, through the generous funding of the FRIENDS, an attractive brochure advertising our tours was printed.

After "The Art of Norway" the audio-visual theatre housed "China Mania," a slide program produced by Education Services and presented in conjunction with the exhibition "Chinese Export Porcelain from the Arthur and Ethel Liebman Collection." Both "The Art of Russia" and "Studies in Connoisseurship: Chinese Paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection" were also accompanied by slide programs. In the fall of 1980 "Edvard Munch: The Early Years," a slide program produced with the collaboration of Art History students and faculty, was shown. It was designed as an educational guide to Edvard Munch's biography and as an accompaniment for the two paintings on loan from the Munch Museum in Oslo: *The Sick Child* and *Four Girls at Aasgaardstrand*.

Other Education Services activities in 1980 include the publication of new and revised gallery guides, written by Vivien Green and Elizabeth Burnham, and printed and distributed through the generous help of the Norman Bassett Foundation, Eugenie Mayer Bolz, the Evjue Foundation, the John A. Johnson Foundation, and the University League, Incorporated. Museum Short Courses offerings were expanded and 370 people came to the Elvehjem for forty-four different class meetings to learn about such topics as "Art in the 1970s" and "American Period Furniture: Identification and Authentication."

The public schools responded favorably to the loan of our preparatory slide packets of the permanent collections with the result that nine out of ten students had Elvehjemgenerated preparation for their tours. (At the time of the



Kate Kulzick demonstrates Norwegian spinning to visitors of "The Art of Norway."

last *Bulletin* that ratio was one out of two.) A new slide packet "Sun, Sea, and Land" was also added to our offerings. Finally, the number of people on guided tours fell to 10,700 from its record "Art of Norway" high of 16,300.

The Elvehjem's educational programs have had the enthusiastic support of both volunteer and professional colleagues (especially those in the Department of Art History) during the Museum's first decade. In the 1980s my concerns will be threefold: to develop and refine programs for visitors with special needs; to continue to seek new funding for the varied activities; and to maintain the high quality of all Educational Services offerings.

> Anne Lambert Curator of Education

Elvehjem Museum of Art Docents

Docents' language skills for tours indicated

Phyllis Anderson Hannah Aschheim Mary Ellen Barwise Dora I. Bauman (Spanish) Mary Berthold Virginia Botsford Sara Boush Marilyn Bownds Diane Bredeson (Norwegian) Irmgard Carpenter Louise Clark Jane Coleman Catharine Conley Susan Covino Rosemarie Deist (German) Diane Drachenberg Virginia Dymond Iane Eisner Laura Engen Elizabeth Erbe Loretta Feldt Sara Fellman Betty French Suzanne Frey Mary Gadzinski Carolyn Gaebler Jon Gember Virginia Gibson Gail Goode Kathleen Green Florence Greville Mary Jane Hamilton Marylin Hart Loni Hayman (German) Lydia Herring (Spanish) Elizabeth Hughes

Ase Idland (Norwegian) Ilka Lozano Debbie Levine Patricia Luberg Rona Malofsky Joan Maynard Jean McKenzie Martine Messert (French) Helene Metzenberg **Judith Miaanes** Elaine Nadler Don Nelson Linda Nichols Alicia Nordness Carmen Peck Virgie Peloquin Jane Pizer Kay Pohle Fran Rall Mary Reppen Helen Roman Selma Rothstein Karen Sack Miriam Sacks Ann Sauthoff Linda Savage Rita Scherb (Russian) Betty Schmitz Pauline Scott Phyllis Sechrist Shannon Shields Susan Stanek Ramona Steele Catherine Steinwand (French) Margy Walker Mark Wiley

A full time staff of six (including two professional librarians), a collection of 84,700 bound volumes, 280 current periodicals and 335 serial subscriptions supported the studio, teaching and research activities of the Department of Art and Art Education, the Department of Art History and the acquisition and curatorial activities of the Elvehjem Museum of Art. These departments had a full time faculty of sixty-one and a class enrollment of almost 10,000 students, including almost 1,000 graduate students. Such figures demonstrate that the Kohler Art Library is one of the largest public university art libraries in North America and surely one of the busiest.

During this period, using state funds, the library expended \$17,700 to purchase 2,500 new books and \$17,000 to maintain its book continuation and periodical subscriptions. In addition, \$11,000 from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and \$25,000 from the Brittingham Trust substantially enriched the library's ability to purchase books and microforms, notably in the areas of classical Greek art, nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture, and twentieth-century graphic art, as well as facsimilies of manuscripts. In addition, the library received 362 titles as gifts and 234 titles by exchange. Faculty and students often complimented the staff on its cheerful, sunny public service, even though heavier demands were made on it than in any previous year. 73,000 readers visited the library, withdrew 48,500 books, and asked 17,000 reference questions.

The major accomplishment of the period was the installation of an electrically movable, track-type, compact book stack system in the former periodical reading area. Funded through the Elvehjem Museum of Art, with state monies, at a cost of \$67,000, the addition was a major, though inadequate, expansion of our book storage space. This additional capacity of about 13,000 volumes accommodated the Kohler Art Library's bound periodicals and allowed us to move the monographs off the floor, although there is still no space for current acquisitions. A complete shift of the monographic and serial volumes was accomplished during this same period.

William C. Bunce Assistant Professor and Director **M** useum shops serve a variety of purposes, but one of their most important functions is educational. In fact, the Internal Revenue Service has given them their tax-exempt status because of their educational services and the nature of the products sold in museum shops. To this end the Elvehjem Museum Shop worked to assure museum visitors of a wider selection of postcards, notecards, prints, posters, catalogues, books, reproductions, replicas and other art related objects.

The Elvehjem Museum Shop also continued to serve as an information center, contributed financially to the Museum's operational budget and sponsored exhibitions in the Whyte Lounge. Under its direction the Whyte Lounge has evolved into a gallery featuring small exhibitions that often include works for sale.

The following is a list of exhibitions in the Whyte Lounge for this period. These exhibitions were often accompanied by lectures and gallery guides.

> Kathleen Parks-Yoast Museum Shop Manager



Whyte Lounge Exhibitions

October, 1978

Wisconsin Weavers, Women on the Loom: recent decorative and functional weavings by fifteen women weavers from southwestern Wisconsin

November, 1978

Contemporary Rosemaling and Norwegian Costumes: American rosemaling by nine Wisconsin artists and handmade costumes representing different Norwegian valleys

February-March, 1979

Eight from the Northern Interior: handmade books by eight midwestern private presses

June, 1979

Three Dimensional Arts with Animal Themes: works by Madison area artists

October–November, 1979

Contemporary Color Photography: works by three women photographers

December, 1979

Oriental Rugs and Textiles: Chinese and Central Asian handknotted rugs as well as antique Tibetan textiles

January–February, 1980

Haitian Arts: traditional Haitian folk art against a background of contemporary photographs of Haiti

October, 1980 Folk Masks of the Americas

December, 1980 Holiday Fantasies: artists' toys and fantasies

Visitor to the Elvehjem browsing in the Museum Shop.

A fter welcoming 400 new members during the 1978 Spring Membership Drive, the FRIENDS of the Elvehjem Museum of Art began a period of active growth and development between July 1978 and December 1980. In addition to the Tenth Anniversary gifts, FRIENDS and Associates contributed two gifts to the permanent collection in 1979: Reynold Beal's *Provincetown Waterfront* (1916) and a Roman limestone portrait bust of a scribe of c. 3rd century A.D.

The FRIENDS' office initiated several program changes during this period. Sunday Afternoon at the Elvehjem opened its first season in 1979 as a cooperative venture between the FRIENDS of the Elvehjem and the Wisconsin Public Radio Association. The series of free chamber music concerts held in Brittingham Gallery V is broadcast live each Sunday during the Academic year (September through May). The concerts feature Wisconsin artists, for the most part, and combine in an appealing fashion the visual and performing arts.

In addition to organizing bus tours to Chicago for special exhibitions, the FRIENDS' office continued to sponsor opening receptions and held several gala events during this period: The elegant reception for "The Art of Norway" on November 4, 1978 was part of a weekend of events organized to celebrate the opening of the largest traveling exhibition ever organized by the Elvehjem. The reception was underwritten by First Federal Savings of Madison and hosted by the Museum Aides, who also organized a gala Russian Ball on March 29, 1979 to open "The Art of Russia" exhibition. Eight hundred FRIENDS and guests attended that opening reception and danced to Russian waltzes played by the Russky Kivintett. The FRIENDS' office also sponsored a lecture and film series to complement the exhibition. For the "George Fred Keck and William Keck: Architects" exhibition, a public opening was held with special family-oriented offerings including live electronic music by Dan Harris, tours, door prizes, and refreshments.

The Elvehjem's Tenth Anniversary celebration was highlighted by several events: a champagne reception featuring the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra was held on November 1, 1980, to celebrate the opening of "Five Decades: Recent Works by Alumni of the Department of Art" in conjunction with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the School of Education. The 1980 FRIENDS' and Associates' anniversary gift, Adolph Gottlieb's *Rucurrent Apparition* was unveiled at the reception. To cap that evening's festivities Chancellor Irving Shain introduced Katherine Harper Mead as the new Director of the Elvehjem.

During this period annual FRIENDS membership dues were increased to reflect rising printing and mailing costs, and the Elvehjem quarterly *Calendar* was redesigned. The new format enables us to announce Museum activities and the increasing number of programs more effectively.

Museum Aides elected officers for the first time since the group's founding in 1975. Under the direction of its first two Presidents, Mary Jo Prieve and Carol Hird, the Aides became increasingly involved in the planning of special events and in implementing new programs. They also created an Information/Membership table which was staffed by volunteers to assist the Museum in further membership development.

In conclusion, we wish to express our gratitude of the Arts Administration Program for providing the FRIENDS' office with an intern each year, to Gail O'Neil for her work as Program Assistant, and to the Museum Aides for their invaluable and selfless contributions.

> Margaret Elwood FRIENDS Coordinator



Dancing to Russian waltzes at the opening reception and gala ball of "The Art of Russia."

Museum Aides

Barbara Anderson Grace Argall Mary Lou Atwell Graciela Aubey Lois Bahnson Arlene Bargman Dora Bauman Gloria Bolles Kate Boynton Barbara Canfield Linda Celesia Gayle Cody Sarah Conroy Sally Cummings Muriel Curry Phyllis Eichman Connie Elvehjem Dorothy Ela Pleasant Frautschi Donna Fullerton Gail Goode Mary Harshaw Jane Henning Janet Herzog Jane Hilsenhoff Ginger Hinderaker Carol Hird Pat Hoff Anne Huggett Patsy Kabaker Gail Kohl Teddy Kubly Angelena Lenehan Becky Martell Joan Maynard Eliza McCready Carolyn McKinney June McLean Delores Meagher Helene Metzenberg Sallie Olsson Karen O'Neil Kristen Ostrander Mary Jo Prieve Barbara Rewey Henryka Schutta Mary Alice Shahidi Mildred Shain Joanne Six Colleen Slater Dottie Sledge Nancy Smith Susan Stanek Nancy Thorp Mary Ann Travers Mary Trewartha Jane Varda Jackie Vastola Anne Warnock Iris Weiland Sue Weston Phyllis Young July 1–August 27, 1978 German Expressionist Drawings

August 12–September 10, 1978 Ernest Trova

September 2-October 15, 1978 Gaston Lachaise, Sculpture and Drawings

November 5, 1978–January 7, 1979 The Art of Norway, 1750-1914

January 20-March 4, 1979 Andreas Feininger: Photographs

February 18—March 25, 1979 Studies in Connoisseurship: Chinese Paintings from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection

March 21-May 6, 1979 The Art of Russia, 1800-1850

April 14—May 20, 1979 George Cruikshank: Printmaker

May 19–July 1, 1979 Oil Sketches by Frederick E. Church

June 2—July 29, 1979 Chinese Snuff Bottles

August 4—September 16, 1979 American Painters of the Impressionist Period Rediscovered

August 11–September 16, 1979 The Graphic Works of Max Klinger September 22–October 28, 1979 Jim Haberman: Photography

October 21, 1979–January 6, 1980 Chinese Export Porcelain from the Ethel and Arthur Liebman Collection

January 27—March 29, 1980 Bon à tirer: Twentieth-Century Prints from the Permanent Collection

February 16-March 16, 1980 Benny Motzfeldt: A Norwegian Pathfinder in Glass

March 29–April 27, 1980 The Selected Work of Frank Lloyd Wright: 1887-1959

April 20–May 18, 1980 Domestic Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright

April 20-May 25, 1980 George Fred Keck and William Keck: Architects

May 31-August 3, 1980 Eadweard Muybridge and West of the Rockies

June 14–July 27, 1980 La Belle Epoque

August 30–October 12, 1980 Utagawa Kuniyoshi, 1797-1861

November 2–January 11, 1981 Five Decades: Recent Works by Alumni of the Department of Art Due to limitations of space a considerable number of important acquisitions have been grouped under collective headings.

Paintings

Bardi, Rudolfo Julio (Argentine) Untitled, 1959 Oil on canvas, 19 3/8"H., 37 3/8"W. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Hollaender, 1979.1110

The Boating Party by Albert Bierstadt. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart P. Feld.

Beal, Reynolds (American, 1867-1951) Provincetown Waterfront, 1916 Oil on artist board, 28 1/4"H., 35 1/2"W. Friends of the Elvehjem Museum of Art purchase, 1979.125

Bierstadt, Albert (American, 1830-1902) *The Boating Party* Oil on canvas, 14"H., 19 1/2"W. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart P. Feld, 1979.1732



Blackburn, Joseph (British, active 1750-1765) Lady in Gray, 1765 Oil on canvas, 50 1/2"H., 41"W. Earl O. Vits Endowment Fund purchase, 1979.76

Dahl, Johan Christian (Norwegian, 1788-1857) Moonlight on the Coast, 1852 Oil on canvas, 13 1/8"H., 18 3/16"W. Evjue Foundation Fund purchase, 1980.3

Duntze, Johannes Bartholomäus (German, 1823-1895) Alpine Landscape, 1878 Oil on canvas, 24 1/16"H., 36 1/2"W. Gift of Mrs. Arthur Camper, 1979.1125

Gifford, Sanford Robinson (American, 1823-1880) Lake and Cows—a Sketch Oil on paper, 7 3/16"H., 10 5/8"W. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart P. Feld, 1978.1180

Giuliani, Giovanni (Italian, b. 1893) Sur Muro di Fronte, 1957 Oil on canvas, 35 3/8"H., 27 1/2"W. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Hollaender, 1979.1109

Gottlieb, Adolph (American, 1903-1974) Recurrent Apparition, 1946 Oil on canvas, 36"H., 54"W. Elvehjem Associates Fund, Friends of the Elvehjem Museum of Art Fund, Emily Mead Baldwin Bell Fund, and Tenth Anniversary Fund purchase, 1980.56

Griffin, Walter (American, 1861-1935) Scene at Fleury, France, 1893 Oil on canvas, 44 1/2"H., 73 1/2"W. Brittingham Fund and Endowment Fund purchase, 1979.77

Jacobsen, Sophus (Norwegian, 1833-1912) On the Inlet by Moonlight Oil on canvas, 33"H., 21 15/16"W. Dr. and Mrs. Paul H. Reitman Fund and Endowment Fund purchase, 1979.124 Phillips, Arthur Bryon (American) Mrs. Robinson Acrylic on board, 29 3/8"H., 24 3/8"W. Gift of Amanda Berls, 1978.233

Simbari, Niccola (Italian, b. 1927) Morning Walk, 1963 Oil on canvas, 39 1/8"H., 27 5/8"W. Gift of Amanda Berls, 1978.234

Tobey, Mark (American, 1890-1976) Untitled, 1969 Tempera on cardboard, 15 1/8"H., 10 7/8"W. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Newman T. Halvorson, 1980.4

Verna, Germaine (Swiss, 1908-1975) Boats Oil on canvas, 21 3/16"H., 28 3/4"W. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. L. William Teweles, 1979.1157

Verna, Germaine (Swiss, 1908-1975) Trees on the Quai Oil on canvas, 25 1/2"H., 36 3/16"W. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. L. William Teweles, 1979.1158

Wyeth, Nevell Convers (American, 1882-1945) Buffalo Hunt Oil on canvas, 19 1/2"H., 29 1/2"W. Gift of Amanda Berls, 1978.232

Ziemski, Rajmund (Polish, b. 1930) Composition, 1960 Oil on canvas, 31"H., 46 3/4"W. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Hollaender, 1979.1108

Unknown Artist (American) Portrait of a Girl in Red with Rabbit, c. 1800-1805 Oil on canvas, 24 1/8"H., 20 3/16"W. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stuart P. Feld, 1979.1733



On the Inlet by Moonlight by Sophus Jacobsen. Dr. and Mrs. Paul H. Reitman Fund and Endowment Fund purchase.

Indian Paintings

Mughal Style Ladies Drinking on a Terrace, mid-18th century Gouache and gold on paper, 9 5/16"H., 6 3/4"W. Gift of Mrs. Earnest C. Watson, 1978.247

Rājasthānī Style (Mewar) Studies of European Figures, mid-19th century Gouache on paper, 4 5/8"H., 4 3/16"W. Gift of Mrs. Earnest C. Watson, 1979.1716

Rājasthānī Style (Bundi) Silva and Parvati, late 17th century Watercolor on paper, approx. 4 3/8"H., 4 1/4"W. Gift of Mrs. Earnest C. Watson, 1979.1717

Rājasthānī Style (probably Bundi) *Rāginī Lalit*, early 18th century Gouache and gold on paper, 14"H., 9 7/16"W. Gift of Mrs. Earnest C. Watson, 1979. 1718

Rājasthānī Style (Bundi or Kotah) Rāga Srī, c. 1780 Gouache on paper, 9 3/8"H., 6 9/16"W. Gift of Mrs. Earnest C. Watson, 1979.1719

Rājasthānī Style (Bundi or Kotah) A Lady on her Way to a Tryst, late 18th century Gouache and gold on paper, 14 3/16"H., 12 7/16"W. Gift of Mrs. Earnest C. Watson 1979.1720

Rājasthānī Style (Bundi) *Rāginī Nata*, late 18th century Gouache on paper, 7 1/8"H., 5"W. Gift of Mrs. Earnest C. Watson, 1979.1721

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"Autumn Moon at Seba" from the Sixty-nine Stations of the Kiso Highway (late 1830s) by Ichiryūsai Hiroshige. Bequest of John Hasbrouck Van Vleck.



"Seacoast at Satta Point with a Great Wave" from the *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (c. 1858-59) by Ichiryūsai Hiroshige. Bequest of John Hasbrouck Van Vleck.

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