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The Metropolitan Museum of Art BULLETIN



James Rosenquist at work on the F-111. Photograph: Hans Namuth

James Rosenquist's F-111

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Pop art can best be described as the new American landscape. Landscape painting has always selected, idealized, and described man's environment. The subject of landscape has shifted from nature to urban life in the twentieth century, and pop art, in its development since 1960, has used the close-up technique of film on the artifacts and data of contemporary communication, making billboards, comic strips, packaging, picture magazines, and advertising the legitimate subjects of an art that is peculiarly American and of our decade.

No movement in the history of American art was named and received more quickly. A year after it hit the galleries and magazines, I had an air conditioner installed in my apartment. An Andy Warhol painting of six Marilyn Monroes was leaning against a wall. "What's that, pop art?" the air-conditioner man asked. Can you imagine someone in a similar situation in 1950, say, asking of a Jackson Pollock, "What's that, abstract expressionism?" For one thing, pop art was literally named before it began (Lawrence Alloway having used the phrase about certain English painters in the late 1950s), while the art of Pollock, Kline, and de Kooning was called action painting, New York school painting, and still other names before it settled down as abstract expressionism.

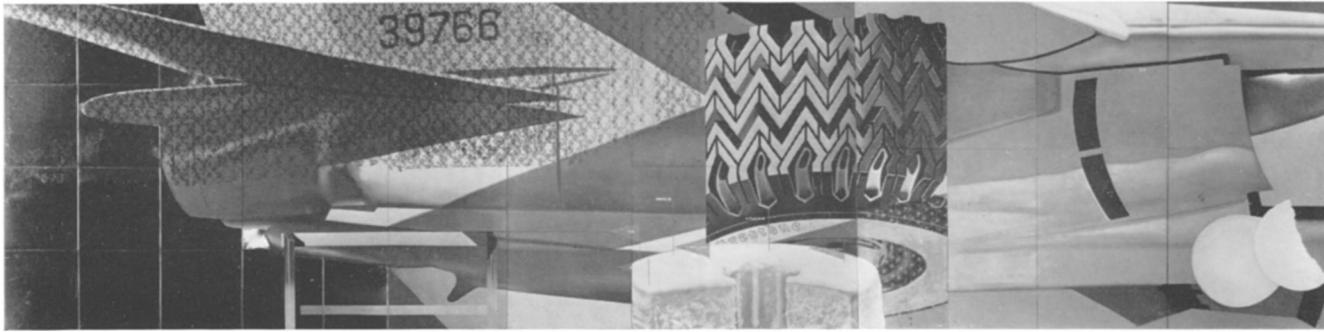
Pop art was radical and came as a surprise, yet somehow the American art public was waiting for it. This of course became clear only after the fact. Nobody could have predicted it. There was a school of critics in the fifties crying for a return to the figure, for a "new humanism." What they were hoping for was something comfortable and recognizable, a resuscitation of the art of the past veiled in the few flaying brushstrokes of abstract expressionism. When they got their new figuration, it was not the tortured humanism of the post-nuclear world for which they were longing but an art based on billboards, comic strips, and advertising. These critics cried "foul," and they cried it hard and long. Some are still crying it.

Pop art has taken into account the way our world looks and the ways in which we receive its information. This explains in part the deep hostility engendered by this art in some, and the quick acceptance it elicited from others. The one group felt that there were things about our environment it was best not to notice, let alone mention. The

Contents

<i>James Rosenquist's F-111</i>	
HENRY GELDZAHLER	277
<i>Re the F-111: A Collector's Notes</i>	
ROBERT C. SCULL	282
<i>An Interview with James Rosenquist</i>	
GENE SWENSON	284
<i>Washington Crossing the Delaware</i>	
JOHN K. HOWAT	289
<i>A Rich Harvest</i>	
JACOB BEAN and JOHN J. MCKENDRY	300
<i>"The Champion Single Skulls"</i>	
GORDON HENDRICKS	306
<i>Peruvian Silver: 1532-1900</i>	
DUDLEY T. EASBY, JR.	308

ON THE COVER: *Detail of the
F-111, illustrated on pages 278-279.*
Photograph: Malcolm Varon



other group recognized the familiar and felt a thrill in seeing it elevated to a fine art. Landscape painting has always made it possible for us to see more clearly and concretely the phenomena of the world that surrounds us. Formerly these phenomena were natural, though often man-shaped; now they are totally man-made.

At its best, then, pop art is an intelligent response to our environment. The youngest generation of Americans, grown up in front of its television sets, may be relatively illiterate in the old terms (that is, library books and verbally oriented IQ's), but it has absorbed and stored millions of visual images, many of which are related to form a new and still mysterious fund of knowledge. What this generation will produce as a result of this visual inundation is totally unpredictable. One of the things I am looking forward to is seeing the art and films of these TV kids ten to twenty years from now. I think it likely that some of the attitudes and styles, some of the techniques and types of subject matter that pop art legitimized will figure heavily in the prehistory of this art of the future.

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By 1957 or 1958 it looked as if American art and mainstream modern art in general were going to remain abstract forever. The abstract expressionists so dominated the scene that the younger artists could choose only between working out the implications of de Kooning's art or, let us say, Philip Guston's. The prime positions in the abstract expressionist field had been pre-empted by the first great practitioners of the style (Pollock, Kline, de Kooning, Newman, Rothko, and the others), and the second generation (it was a curious generation in that it came only about five years after the first) had little room in which to maneuver on its own.

It was in this atmosphere that the differing sensibilities of half a dozen pop artists were forming. They shared the common background of modern art, were aware of the recent dominance of the abstract expressionist style, and each alone, in his different way, reacted against the flayed canvas, the loose brushstroke, the sense of personal handwriting. These young artists (I am referring to Andy Warhol, Jim Rosenquist, Jim Dine, Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Indiana, Tom Wesselman, Claes Oldenburg, George Segal, and Marisol), for the most part yet unknown to each other, shared another bond. They were all very much aware of, and very much impressed with, the work of two artists who might have been second-generation abstract expressionists but who chose rather to invent their way out of that style. These inventors were, of course, Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, both of whom emerged in the mid-fifties with intimate knowledge of the methods and achievement of their abstract expressionist contemporaries.

It is simple-minded to say that pop art came as a reaction. Cause and effect enter into the history of art, but they never operate as clearly as we like to think. It would be more accurate to say that of the many factors that contributed to pop art, a reaction against abstract expressionism figures as a major one.

F-111, by James Rosenquist (born 1933), American. 1965. Oil on canvas, 10 x 86 feet. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Scull, L 68.3. Photographs (assembled): Rudolph Burckhardt

Jim Rosenquist was trained as a painter by Cameron Booth in Minnesota, beginning in 1952. He came to New York in 1955, painted abstractions, and through 1960 supported himself by painting billboards, often in the Times Square area. He became completely conversant with the techniques of enlarging photographs in paint to the scale of the billboard. It was when he discovered, independently but at the same time as his future pop art colleagues, that there was no intrinsic reason to isolate the commercial billboard technique from the fine arts, that his own work entered the mainstream of inventive contemporary painting. One way of reading the history of innovation in twentieth-century art is to see it as the progressive inclusion of images and techniques previously unassociated with art. Duchamp's ready-mades, the art of children, graffiti, the art of the insane, the imagery of dreams, the abstract and automatic handwriting of the surrealists, and most recently the commercial and advertising techniques of our society have all been made legitimate through the authority of artists. Each came at first as a shock; each quickly became recognized as art. Dada, surrealism, collage, the art of Paul Klee, the art of Jean Dubuffet, abstract expressionism, and now pop art have all resulted from the confrontation of traditional technique with new and previously extraesthetic material.

Rosenquist's F-111 is not only the largest pop work, it is also the grandest. Although its precise size is interesting only statistically, the painting is thirteen feet longer than the airplane it memorializes. More to the point, the F-111 stands as the symbol of the industrial-military complex of our time, a paranoid subject worthy of Dali. The meaning of the F-111 as fighter and bomber is ruthlessly counterpointed by the angel food cake, the beach umbrella, the little girl under the dryer. Rosenquist's work always raises the specter of surrealism, but, as he himself has pointed out, there is a major difference. In the classical surrealist painting the space is that of a box surrounded by a frame, or, to put it another way, the objects and images exist in a space just beyond a hypothetical window. This is the space of Renaissance painting. Jackson Pollock and the painters who followed him changed the scale of painting to the point where Rosenquist can say, "My images are so much larger than the picture frame that they are at first invisible." He maintains that his intention is not to paint heroically but rather to make a visual equivalent to the physical extravagance of our economy, which he calls an "economy of surplus."

One's impulse may be to make sense of the dislocated visual elements in Rosenquist's work: to read them as a story, to superimpose a moral on them. But, while these are to an extent problem pictures, there are no correct answers. Much of the answer, the rightness of Rosenquist's imagery, is visual and preverbal. In abstract painting, particularly in abstract expressionism, there is a temptation to read the recognizable into the abstract forms. The suggestibility is that of Polonius to Hamlet's indication that a cloud is like a camel, then a weasel, then a whale. Rosenquist reverses this process and makes of the recognizable an abstraction, by taking details and blowing them up to the scale of Cinemascope close-ups, by dislocating the familiar and placing it in a new context. Thus, specifically, the spaghetti in the F-111 refers back as much to abstract painting of the fifties as it does to the billboard advertising for spaghetti from which it

derives. As a visual element it hovers between the two and works to unify the right-hand quarter of the painting. The absence of spaghetti behind the skindiver's exhaled air and its replacement by undifferentiated black serves to highlight the similarity of the image to the atomic explosion beyond the umbrella. Rosenquist completely controls such devices.

The F-111 is being shown in this Museum on three walls. Elsewhere it has been shown all on one wall, on two walls, or on four walls, wrapping around a room. However exhibited, the painting, through the compelling nature of its imagery and its sheer magnitude, creates an environment that engulfs the viewer. The question of quality seems irrelevant when one is confronted with the F-111. In its own terms the painting is so powerful and consistent that the viewer's total attention is given to absorbing it. Before and after the confrontation the immemorial question, Is it art? suggests itself. One may also wonder, Will its impact last? Such questions can be answered only with time. For the moment the painting makes a big statement and makes it convincingly.

Detail of the F-111



Re the F-111: A Collector's Notes

ROBERT C. SCULL

In 1961 I heard about an artist who was working in a manner different from that of the then prevailing abstract expressionism. He was not represented by a gallery, and one had to visit his studio to see his work. My guide was Richard Bellamy, director of the Green Gallery. One Sunday we rendezvoused in front of a building on Coenties Slip, in lower Manhattan, and after the usual shout-from-the-street-instead-of-doorbell, we made our way upstairs.

To this point, the preceding could describe many of my loft and studio visits. Meeting James Rosenquist was another experience. I encountered an ill-at-ease ex-North Dakotan of about twenty-eight who spoke in a painfully abstract manner. He had been in New York some six years, I learned, and till recently he had made his living as a billboard painter. I had to ask to be shown his paintings. The first ones, his older work, evidenced the influence of the abstract expressionists. This was not surprising, considering the impact of the great works that had recently come from Pollock, de Kooning, Still, Rothko, and Kline. After this slightly historical display Rosenquist brought out three canvases he had just completed. They were figurative works, but their images were unlike any I had ever seen. They seemed to me as disconnected and puzzling as Rosenquist's way of speaking.

The one that interested me the most was a large canvas in acid-bright colors. It was not the color that aroused my curiosity, but rather the madness of the imagery.

Entitled *The Light That Won't Fail*, the painting was divided into three sections. The largest was given over to a large part of a television screen; one of the smaller sections revealed part of a Spam sandwich, the other, the profile of a girl's mouth, chin, and neck.

I asked why the objects were not centered – why only fragments of them were used. No answer. I pressed for some explanation. The artist finally came out with, “Man, this is our new religion – the cathode-ray tube – and the painting *is* the explanation.”

I liked that. It focused on what I came to see was at the heart of Rosenquist's work: his immediate concern with the forces playing on all of us.

I judge art, not by history, but by the measure of my response and personal involvement in the art experience. *The Light That Won't Fail* almost annoyed me and at the same time it charmed me, for I could see that Rosenquist was looking at things in a new, contemporary manner. I bought the painting then and there (incidentally giving the artist his first sale). It seems to me as strong today as it did in 1961.

By 1964 the extraordinary movement that came to be known as pop art was a generally accepted fact. New works by Rosenquist, Oldenburg, Dine, Wesselman, Warhol, Indiana, and Lichtenstein were being bought by collectors and museums, and the new art had even triumphed over the name given to it, half in fun, half in condescension. During the winter of 1964-1965 the art world heard that Rosenquist was working on a mammoth canvas. I asked Jim if I might see it. No, I was told. Even he had not seen it all together, he said, since he was painting it in sections and his studio, big as it was, could not accommodate the whole thing. Disappointed in that, I inquired if he had other new work to show. No, he said, because the “big one” was taking all his time.

As the weeks went by, about the only solid news from the studio was that the new work included a gigantic rendering of a fighter-bomber and that the painting itself was more than eighty feet long. Jim gave his friends the impression that his task was perhaps too great. He would mumble that he “had to get on with it,” that “there was no turning back.” I sensed obsession. His attitude may have had romantic overtones, but what it meant, practically speaking, was that for over half a year there were no canvases for sale and the artist's obligations were piling up.

In the spring of 1965 I left the city on a vacation. After attending four of Jim's openings in a row, I was going to miss the unveiling of the “big one,” since his schedule and mine could not be made to coincide. However, I

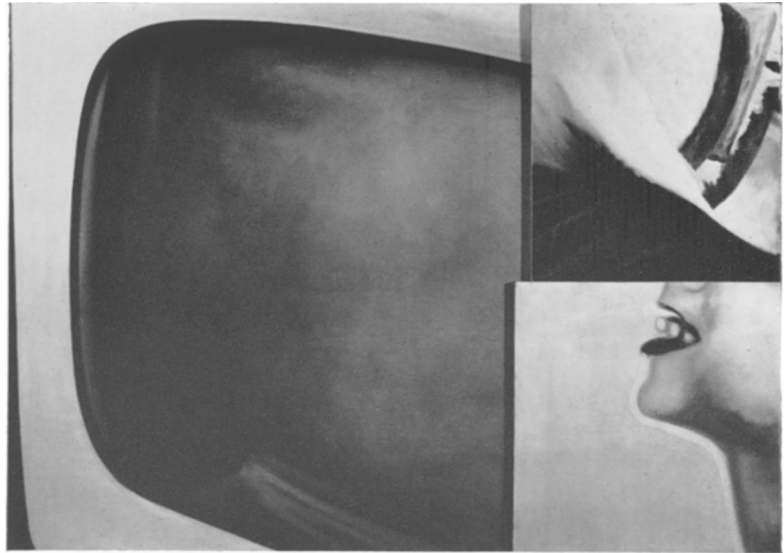
counted on returning while the canvas was still in the gallery.

The exhibition opened and the F-111 was an immediate success—if that word also means instant controversy. As usual, Rosenquist's work was applauded by those who understood its significance. Those who disliked pop art could not dismiss the painting and were astonished by what they deemed the arrogance of such a huge undertaking.

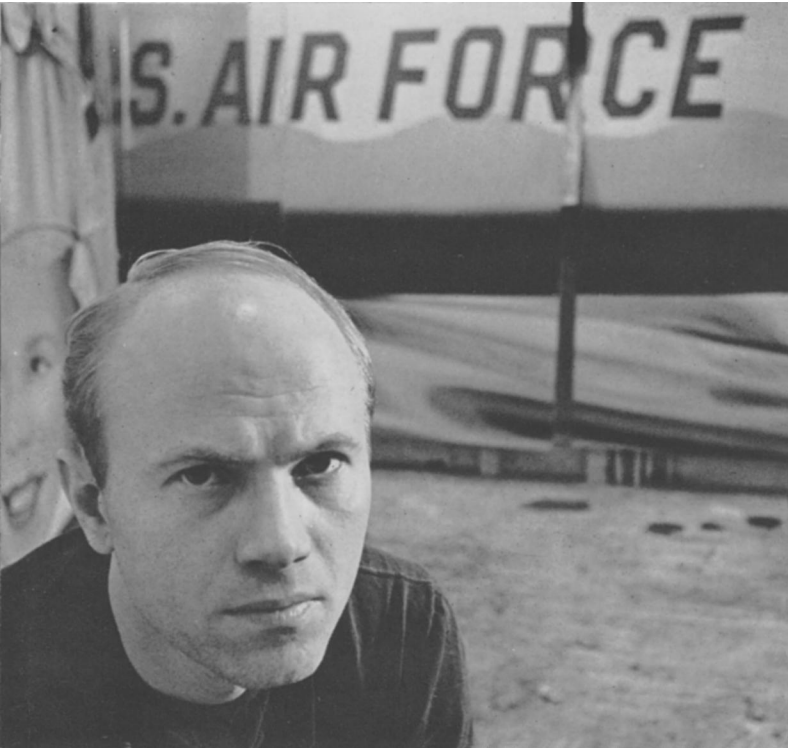
My vacation ended. When I returned to New York and went to 4 East 77 Street, I was surprised to see trucks at the entrance and moving men on the stairs leading to the gallery. Somehow I had arrived a day late and the painting was being taken down. Worse news was in store. Leo Castelli, Jim's dealer, was in the act of dispatching forty-one of its fifty-one panels to individual buyers all over the United States. The role of this remarkable dealer must be noted. Although he had sold the majority of the panels, he had had the foresight to stipulate that all sales were subject to cancellation if a purchaser could be found for the entire painting before it left the gallery. I informed Mr. Castelli that I would buy the painting and keep it together.

For me, the F-111 is tremendous. I am not referring to its size, although it is certainly a tour de force in this respect, with some 850 square feet of real excitement. First of all, it is a great painting in the traditional sense of orderliness, integrity, and execution. But I have encountered these qualities in many paintings I did not care to own. Two things drew me to this one: its authority—every bit of it was done with the dexterity of a master—and its content. Most art historians seem to agree that one of the specifics for greatness in a work of art is that it seriously mirror or comment on its own time. The F-111 does this overwhelmingly. It presents the essence of the United States' relationship to the world, displaying the equation of the good life of peace, with its luxuries and aspirations, and our involvement with the potential for instant war and final annihilation. I regard the painting as a milestone in the visual literature of what is perhaps art's greatest theme: the struggle between life and death. It speaks to all mankind, employing the plain language of everyday men, not the secret signs of the specialist.

The history of the F-111 since I bought it is a story in itself. Like a true flying machine, it has traveled to other countries, touching down wherever a large enough wall space was available. I am happy indeed to welcome it home again and to have it seen by visitors to the Metropolitan.



The Light That Won't Fail, by James Rosenquist. 1961. Oil on canvas, 67¾ x 96 inches. Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Scull, New York. Photograph: Eric Pollitzer



An Interview with James Rosenquist

When the F-111 was exhibited at the Jewish Museum in New York in 1965, Gene Swenson, a poet and playwright, interviewed the artist as they stood before the painting. The interview appeared in the Fall 1965 issue of the Partisan Review. A condensation of it is offered here.

SWENSON: What is the F-111?

ROSENQUIST: It is the newest, latest fighter-bomber at this time, 1965. The first of its type cost many million dollars. People are planning their lives through work on this bomber, in Texas or Long Island. A man has a contract from the company making the bomber, and he plans his third automobile and his fifth child because he is a technician and has work for the next couple of years. Then the original idea is expanded, another thing is invented; and the plane already seems obsolete. The prime force of this thing has been to keep people working, an economic tool; but behind it, this is a war machine.

SWENSON: What about the man who makes the F-111?

ROSENQUIST: He is just misguided. Masses of people are being snagged into a life and then continue that life, being enticed a little bit more and a little bit more in the wrong direction.

SWENSON: What have you tried to do in this painting?

ROSENQUIST: I think of it like a beam at the airport. A man in an airplane approaching a beam at the airport, he may fly twenty or thirty miles laterally, out of the exact way, but he continues to be on the beam. As he approaches closer to what he wants, or to the airport, he can be less divergent because the beam is a little narrower, maybe only one or two miles out of the way, and less and less until when he gets right on it; then he'll be there.

The ambience of the painting is involved with people who are all going toward a similar thing. All the ideas in the whole picture are very divergent, but I think they all seem to go toward some basic meaning. They're divergent so it's allowable to have orange spaghetti, cake, light bulbs, flowers . . .

SWENSON: Going toward what?

ROSENQUIST: Some blinding light, like a bug hitting a light bulb.

I think of the picture as being shoved into a boiler. The picture is my personal reaction as an individual to the heavy ideas of mass media and communication and to other ideas that affect artists. I gather myself up to do something in a specific time, to produce something that could be exposed as a human idea of the extreme acceleration of feelings. The way technology appears to me now is that to take a stance – in a painting, for example – on some human qualities seems to be taking a stance on a conveyor belt: the minute you take a position on a

question or on an idea, then the acceleration of technology, plus other things, will in a short time already have moved you down the conveyor belt. The painting is like a sacrifice from my side of the idea to the other side of society.

If a company or institution is using people like digits and massing them in schools of learning toward appreciating new ideas and new inventions, I react to that and try to pose a problem to think in terms of humanity again. So this picture is partial, incomplete maybe, but a fragment I am expending into the boiler.

SWENSON: In 1961 it seemed that you were adopting techniques and styles that were not your own but those of sign painters, professional and almost objective techniques. That had the aspect of anti-style; yet *Time* magazine recently referred to "Rosenquist's precise, realistic style."

ROSENQUIST: Well, the style I use was gained by doing outdoor commercial work as hard and as fast as I could. My techniques for me are still anti-style. I have an idea what I want to do, what it will look like when I want it finished – in between is just a hell of a lot of work.

When they say the Rosenquist style is very precise, maybe they just know that painting style as they know it is going out of style. Ways of accomplishing things are extended to different generations in oblique places. Billboard painting techniques are much like Mexican muralist techniques. Few people extend themselves in it at the time because it is not very much considered.

SWENSON: Would you fill in some background on each of the images, beginning at the left?

ROSENQUIST: I used those same wallpaper roller patterns in 1962 on a painting called *Silver Skies*. I saw the pattern in an elevator lobby and thought of a solid atmosphere; you walk outside of your apartment into what used to be open air and all of a sudden feel that it has become solid with radioactivity and other undesirable elements. So I used a wallpaper roller with hard artificial flowers to hang in the atmosphere like a veil. In the panel at the other end, at the right side of the painting, I tried aluminum flowers on an aluminum panel to give a softer visual effect.

SWENSON: What about the aluminum panels on either end?

ROSENQUIST: People came into the gallery and immediately they'd say, "It's a picture of a jet plane painted on aluminum panels." People thought the ends were simply panels that hadn't been painted, and that

the rest of the picture was on aluminum. The physical feeling that gave, the feeling of metal, is something different from canvas, a brittle feeling. The picture is mostly painted on canvas, but I think I achieved that brittle feeling with an economy—at least for a few people.

Originally the picture was an idea of fragments of vision being sold, incompleting fragments; there were about fifty-one panels in the picture. With one of them on your wall, you could feel something of a nostalgia, that it was incomplete and therefore romantic. That has to do with the idea of the man now collecting, a person buying a recording of the time or history. He could collect it like a fragment of architecture from a building on Sixth Avenue and Fifty-second Street; the fragment even now or at least in the near future may be just a vacant aluminum panel whereas in an earlier period it might have been a fancy cornice or something seemingly more human.

Years ago when a man watched traffic going up and down Sixth Avenue, the traffic would be horses and there would be a pulsing, muscular motion to the speed on the avenue. Now what he sees may be just a glimmer, a flash of static movement; and that idea of nature brings a strange, for me even now, a strange idea of what art may become, like a fragment of this painting which is just an aluminum panel.

SWENSON: It might have been better, closer to your intention, if it had been sold piece by piece.

ROSENQUIST: Yes.

SWENSON: Then what would have happened to the picture?

ROSENQUIST: I don't know exactly. I wanted to relate the idea of the new man, the new person who appreciates things, to this painting. It would be to give the idea to people of collecting fragments of vision. One piece of this painting would have been a fragment of a machine the collector was already mixed up with, involved in whether he knew it or not. The person has already bought these airplanes by paying income taxes or being part of the community and the economy. The present men participate in the world whether it's good or not and they may physically have bought parts of what this image represents many times.

Then anyone interested in buying a blank part of this, knowingly or unknowingly—that's the joke—he would think he is buying art and, after all, he would just be buying a thing that paralleled part of the life he lives. Even though this picture was sold in one chunk,



I think the original intention is still clear. The picture is in parts.

SWENSON: If someone bought one of these panels, he would be buying a souvenir, of the painting, of the F-111, of the time?

ROSENQUIST: Yes.

SWENSON: To get back to the images, what about the . . . angel food cake?

ROSENQUIST: It's foodstuff. The small flags planted on it show the elements in the cake, like protein and iron and riboflavin—food energy. There is also a shaft that goes in the middle of the cake that is from the core or mold used to bake those cakes. I always remember it as some kind of abyss, this big hole in the middle of the cake. The flags also mean flaming candles, like on a birthday cake, of age and time, and flags being planted and staking out areas in life, like food, being eaten for energy. Actually the F-111, the plane itself, could be a giant birthday cake lying on a truck for a parade or something—it has even been used like that—but it was developed as a horrible killer.

SWENSON: And the tire?

ROSENQUIST: The tire is a crown, a celebration of the town and country winter tire. The design, magnified, appears regal. I'd never thought of what rubber tires or wheels meant to me, and I looked at the tire tread and it seemed very strong and cruel or at least very, very visual. It also looked like it was rising up, like a crown, and so I used the image on top of the cake that way. And of course the two images have similar shapes.

SWENSON: And those three light bulbs?

ROSENQUIST: Yes, in pink, yellow and blue, which are the three basic colors of the spectrum. In that area of the picture they allowed me to try experiments in color and scale that I could not have tried in another painting in a smaller size. That huge area allowed me to paint with regular artist's oil paint, the pink-gray and yellow-gray and blue-gray, on top of a fluorescent background. The dark red fluorescent paint appears to be lighter than the three light bulbs but the paint in the three light bulbs lets you get the idea that the bulbs are glowing, but not that they are turned on. It seemed to be like force against force.

The broken one is not broken the way a light bulb would break, but more like an egg would crack.

The spaghetti just on the right, with the fork, has been painted orange with artist's oil color; then a transparent fluorescent dark red color has been spread on top of the whole area, to give it a general tone change, like a glaze.

SWENSON: The girl under the hair dryer?

ROSENQUIST: In the gallery she seemed very crucial; everyone looked at her because they faced her when they went into the room. Here at the Jewish Museum it isn't so prominent and I like it better. I thought of taking the face out many times, but then the whole painting would be closer to what is historically the look of abstract painting. I didn't think the face related to earlier painting.

The little girl is *the* female form in the picture. It is like someone having her hair dried out on the lawn, in Texas or Long Island. Painting the grass in Day-Glo green colors is like the change of nature in relation to the new look of the landscape.

SWENSON: Next there is an umbrella superimposed over an atom bomb blast. Is that about fallout?

ROSENQUIST: I suppose the umbrella could be something about fallout, but for me it's like someone raising his umbrella or raising his window in the morning, looking out the window and seeing a bright red and yellow atomic bomb blast, something like a cherry blossom, a beautiful view of an atomic blast.

When I was working in Times Square and painting signboards the workmen joked around and said the super center of the atomic target was around Canal Street and Broadway. That's where the rockets were aimed from Russia; and these guys, the old-timers would say, "Well, I'm not worried. At least we'll have a nice view right up here against the wall."

To me it's now a generation removed, the post-Beat young people. They're not afraid of an atomic war and think that sort of attitude is passé, that it won't occur. The Beat people, like Kerouac and Robert Frank, Dick Bellamy, Ginsberg and Corso, their first sensibility was of it being used immediately and they were hit by the idea of it, they were shocked and sort of threatened. Now the younger people are blasé and don't think it can happen. So this is a restatement of that Beat idea, but in full color.

The umbrella is friendlier than having to do with fallout. It's an aperture for a view. The rod holding up the umbrella goes right down the middle of the explosion like something being saved, the center of something else at the same time. The umbrella is realistic, it's a realistic vision, with frost or snow on top of it. The blue in the umbrella is its own color, not a Surrealistic piece of sky. It's a beach umbrella that was left up in the winter.

Then next, that's an underwater swimmer wearing a helmet with an air bubble above his head, an exhaust air

bubble that's related to the breath of the atomic bomb. His "gulp!" of breath is like the "gulp!" of the explosion. It's an unnatural force, man-made.

I heard a story that when a huge number of bombers hit in Vietnam, and burned up many square miles of forest, then the exhaust of the heat and air pressure of the fire created an artificial storm and it started raining and helped put the fire out. The natives thought that something must be on their side; they thought it was a natural rain that put the fire out but it was actually a man-made change in the atmosphere.

SWENSON: What is the blanket-like form at the bottom of the picture?

ROSENQUIST: It is a huge arabesque, a huge fold. I painted it as a fold of aluminum material, an image of aluminum cloth. It appears soft, like a blanket.

It reminds me of a painter's drop cloth, finishing up the bottom of the painting, hanging under the painting out onto the floor, catching the drops and residue of his paint. That's the nature from the artist's brush. The idea—his art—is on the wall; the junk or stuff of paint on the floor is nature, and something else. The artist is like a samurai; he selects something, and his art is what the artist says it is, it's not something else. The shiny gray arabesque is an extension of the relation between the painter and nature which could be a drop cloth or paint quality.

Then the arabesque changes into foodstuff, into spaghetti, and from its gray color into orange. The painting has its ending in an orange field, the image of spaghetti.

SWENSON: Some critics have said you have a love of size for its own sake. Do you?

ROSENQUIST: No.

SWENSON: What about originality for its own sake?

ROSENQUIST: Not conscious of it—and not of art for its own sake.

I do it for myself, but there is the possibility that it could appeal to all kinds of people, that it could snag someone into looking. I thought maybe if paintings were just done very well, the person could grasp something in one way immediately, the look of it, visually. After a person has reached a certain thing, after he has gone through it, then he could discard it.

The fault of this picture may be that it lets someone get too far off the beam; one person said that I had a love for the billboard—and damnit, I don't love it at all.

SWENSON: You were quoted in the *Times* as saying that you wanted this painting to be an antidote to the new devices that affect the ethics of the human being.

ROSENQUIST: Yes. I hope this picture is a quantity that will release the idea of the new devices; my idea is that a man will turn to subversion if he even hears a rumor that a lie detector will be used on him in the normal course of business. What would happen if a major corporation decided to use all the new devices available to them? I'm sure the hint of this is starting to change people's ethics.

I said this picture was an antidote. To accumulate an antidote is to shift gears, to get to an area where an artist can be an effect.

SWENSON: You were also quoted as saying that you were involved with the United States and the position of a person trying to be an artist. Were you suggesting by this that people ought to learn painting rather than how to run IBM machines or make F-111s?

ROSENQUIST: No. I'm amazed by—when I think of technology, I think of it being fantastic. I *would* want them to stop making F-111s because it's a war industry; but I wouldn't try to get a technologist to become an artist.

SWENSON: You don't see any war between technology and art?

ROSENQUIST: No. I see a closer tie with technology and art and a new curiosity about new methods of communication coming from all sides. The present position of an artist seems to be a person who offers up a gift, an antidote to something, a small relief to a heavy atmosphere. A person looking at it may say, "That's beautiful, amazing, fantastic, a nice thing." Artists seem to offer up their things with very much humility and graciousness while society now and the economy seem to be very rambunctious. The stance of the artists now, compared with the world and the ideas in society, does not seem to equate; they don't relate except as an artist offering up something as a small gift. So the idea of this picture was to do an extravagance, something that wouldn't simply be offered as a relief.

Washington Crossing the Delaware

JOHN K. HOWAT *Assistant Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture*

“I do not hesitate to say to you, gentlemen, that I consider the picture of ‘Washington Crossing the Delaware,’ as one of the greatest productions of the age, and eminently worthy to commemorate the grandest event in the military life of the illustrious man whom all nations delight to honor. I am quite sure you will all join me in cordially wishing health and happiness to Mr. Leutze.” The occasion for this enthusiastic toast to Emanuel Leutze was a New York banquet given in his honor in September 1851, when he was accompanying his most recent and already most famous painting (Figure 2) on tour along the eastern seaboard. The gentleman offering the toast was Abraham M. Cozzens, a leading New York art collector, a patron of Leutze’s, and, most importantly, the president of the American Art-Union. The Art-Union, a public-spirited institution, had supported American artists since its founding in 1840 by purchasing their works and distributing them by lot. It was soon, in 1852, to be declared illegal in New York State for operating a lottery, but commendations from its president still carried considerable weight. Although his praise of Leutze’s painting, which now belongs to the Metropolitan and is on indefinite loan to the Washington Crossing State Park Commission in Pennsylvania, may seem fulsome, Cozzens was merely joining the chorus of American and European critics who had been lauding the picture for the almost two years since the project had been started. What the well-known artist did in his Düsseldorf studio was regarded as news: the intelligence in the fall of 1849 was that Leutze had completed his latest masterpiece, *The Attainder of Strafford*, for the Art-Union, and that he had begun work on sketches for *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, “the figures to be life size.” Bulletins came forth regularly from reporters, artists, friends, and Leutze himself, following the progress of the painting, and these were eagerly printed and reprinted in the art gossip columns of Europe and the United States. The artist Worthington Whittredge, who along with Eastman Johnson worked in Leutze’s studio, gave an eyewitness account of the preparation of the picture in his autobiography: “I had not been in Düsseldorf an hour before [Leutze] showed me a pencil sketch of this subject . . . a large canvas for it had been ordered . . . when it came he set to work immediately drawing in the boat and figures with charcoal, and without a model. All the figures were carefully corrected from models when he came to paint

1



2



Washington Crossing the Delaware

by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze (1816-1868)

3

1. According to Eastman Johnson, this first version was exhibited in Leutze's Düsseldorf studio flanked by American and Prussian flags and several cannon. In a letter written after the fire, Leutze mentioned that the painting measured twenty feet four inches by nearly twelve feet. At the time of its destruction in 1942, it belonged to the Kunsthalle, Bremen. Photograph: Foto Marburg



2. The second version differs from the original only in minor details, the most noticeable being the treatment of the water, the placement of the chunks of ice, and the clear depiction of the flag as the one adopted in 1777. The painting is on indefinite loan from the Museum to the Washington Crossing State Park Commission, Pennsylvania. Oil on canvas, 12 feet 5 inches x 21 feet 3 inches. Signed and dated at lower right: E. Leutze. / Düsseldorf 1851. Gift of John Stewart Kennedy, 97.34

3. Popular paintings were circulated through engravings, and when the large size of an original made it difficult to transport it to the engraver's studio, a smaller replica was often made. Leutze's replica of the Metropolitan's painting is approximately one third its size. The replica was exhibited at the New York Exposition of 1853 and during the 1890s at this Museum. Oil on canvas, 40½ x 67⅞ inches. Signed at lower right: E. Leutze. Lent by Mr. and Mrs. J. William Middendorf II, SL 67.23.26. Photograph: Donald Brennwasser



4

4. The engraving by Paul Girardet after the replica was not published until 1853, but as early as 1851 it had been advertised by Goupil, Vibert & Co. as "the most beautiful and largest line engraving ever published." Although the claim is a doubtful one, the plate was large for its time—22⅜ by 38½ inches. The eager public could buy different impressions on varying grades of paper for prices ranging from fifteen to forty dollars. Prints Division, The New York Public Library

them. But he found a great difficulty in finding American types for the heads and figures, all the German models being either too small or too closely set in their limbs. . . . He caught every American who came along. . . . Mr. John Groesbeck of Cincinnati . . . called to see me at Leutze's studio and was taken for one of the figures. . . . My own arrival and that of my friend were a god-send to him. The friend . . . was seized, a bandage put around his head, a poor wounded fellow put in the boat with the rest, while I was . . . made to do service . . . for the steersman and again for Washington himself. . . . Clad in Washington's full uniform, heavy chapeau and all, spy-glass in one hand and the other on my knee, I was nearly dead when the operation was over. They poured champagne down my throat and I lived through it. This was all because no German model could be found anywhere who could fill Washington's clothes, a perfect copy which Leutze, through the influence of Mr. Seward, had provided from the Patent Office in Washington. The head of Washington in this picture was painted from Houdon's bust [actually a full-length statue, now in the Virginia State House, Richmond. Leutze owned several casts taken from the face]. . . . A large portion of the great canvas is occupied by the sky. Leutze mixed the colors for it overnight and invited Andreas Achenbach [the leading landscape painter of the Düsseldorf school] and myself to help him cover the canvas the next day, it being necessary to blend the colors easily, to cover it all over in one day. It was done; Achenbach thought of the star, and painted it, a lone almost invisible star, the last to fade in the morning light."

Misfortune interrupted the final stages of the work on the huge picture. In a letter dated November 10, 1850, and published in the December *Bulletin of the American Art-Union*, Leutze reported: "I write to you with a heavy heart. . . . My picture of Washington is so much injured that I must give up all hope of being able to finish it without commencing it entirely anew. Five days ago, having just put down my palette to leave for

dinner, I was startled by a crackling noise behind me, and on turning, saw the flames bursting through the floor of my studio. The apartments below were all on fire. All hopes to extinguish it seemed vain. Nothing else was left but to cut the picture from the frame. . . . It was the last thing we did—the rooms were already cleared of everything. We succeeded perfectly in getting the canvas down, cutting it from the frame and rolling it, but the good people outside in their zeal to assist, seized it so roughly that it was broken in more than five places, and no chance of restoring it left.

"I am particularly grieved to think how much longer I shall be detained from going to America. I have even thought of going at once and painting the picture there. Already, I have ordered another canvas, and shall go to work upon it at once as soon as I receive it. Nothing shall deter me."

And, of course, nothing did. Leutze received the equivalent of about \$1,800 from an insurance company, which thereby became the owner of the picture. In spite of his statement that there was "no chance of restoring it," Leutze did repair the picture for the company, and it was subsequently raffled off. Eventually the first version (Figure 1) was placed in the Kunsthalle, Bremen, where it was destroyed during a bombing raid in 1942.

Leutze kept the damaged painting for about six months for restoration and to use as a model for a replica. By April he had progressed so far with the new painting that Adolphe Goupil of the Paris art firm of Goupil, Vibert & Co. traveled to Düsseldorf especially to buy it. Under the title of *The International Art-Union*, Goupil, Vibert & Co. had recently appeared on the New York art scene as an aggressive commercial competitor of the American Art-Union, selling memberships that entitled the subscribers to engravings of pictures owned by the firm. The *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* for April 1851 could not hide its displeasure with Leutze over his willingness to deal with Goupil, reminding its readers that the Amer-

ican Art-Union had "done a great deal to advance Mr. Leutze to the position he now occupies." The *Bulletin* went on to comment dryly: "Mr. Goupil, it is said, is one of the best judges of art in Europe. He visited Düsseldorf on purpose to see this picture, and bought it immediately upon Leutze's own terms, viz., 10,000 thalers—about \$6,000 of our money."

Work continued, and the picture was finished on schedule in July 1851. After exhibition in Düsseldorf, the painting was shipped to New York to receive the commendations of Mr. Cozzens and a wide press, including the *New York Evening Mirror*, which went somewhat further than Cozzens, calling it "the grandest, most majestic, and most effective painting ever exhibited in America." In a period of four months, over fifty thousand paying visitors saw the picture at the Stuyvesant Institute in New York, and it was then that the New York collector, financier, and shipping magnate, Marshall O. Roberts, bought what was to be the largest picture in his collection. By an agreement between Roberts and Goupil the painting resumed its tour; it was shown in Washington to acclaim so great that certain Congressmen urged the purchase of the picture or a replica for exhibition in the White House. Leutze offered to paint the replica and a companion piece, Washington at the Battle of Monmouth. Nothing came of the White House project, but Leutze subsequently painted the large Monmouth picture, which is now owned by the University of California at Berkeley. Leutze did prepare another, reduced, version of the Goupil-Roberts picture (Figure 3). This one, now in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. J. William Middendorf II, is presently on exhibition at the Metropolitan. The picture was prepared for the use of the Paris engraver Paul Girardet, who had been commissioned late in 1851 by Goupil, Vibert & Co. to produce a plate after the painting (Figure 4). It is through this widely distributed print that the picture achieved its greatest fame and became one of the most generally recognized of all American pictures.

The rise of Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze to the heights of international fame as an artistic *Wunderkind* was rapid. Born in Gmünd, Württemberg, Germany, in 1816, he was a small boy when brought with his family first to Fredricksburg, Virginia, and then to Philadelphia, by his father, a political refugee and comb manufacturer. In his youth, Leutze studied with the well-known Philadelphia drawing master John Rubens Smith; afterward he worked intermittently in Philadelphia, Washington, and Virginia as a portrait painter and draughtsman. The young artist returned to Philadelphia, and in 1840 won praise with the exhibition at the Artist's Fund Society of his Indian Contemplating the Setting Sun. This and other works brought Leutze the support of the leading Philadelphia collector, Edward L. Carey, and with Carey's help Leutze was given sufficient commissions to make a European trip possible. He went directly to Düsseldorf, arriving early in 1841, and quickly established himself as a promising young member of the local artists' circle. He wrote to his sister: "When I arrived here, I was happy to be immediately admitted by the best society and soon was showered with evidences of friendship. I feel that I am becoming very proud . . . suddenly to have conquered the years I expected to spend in Germany as a student, and . . . when I did not know how I would make a living. So I have already achieved my goal and, once having won a name in Europe as an artist, I need have no fear in America. Now just a short time of patience and the years of trial are past. My innermost wishes and hopes would never have placed me in the position which I have attained now and soon, very soon, a new dawn will open for us." Leutze had good reason to feel pleased. Karl Friedrich Lessing, the leading history painter of the Düsseldorf Academy, had accepted him as a private pupil, making it unnecessary for Leutze to endure the drudgery of the regular academic classes. Also, in 1841, Leutze's painting Columbus before the Council of Salamanca was bought for the Düsseldorf Art-Union by Friedrich Wilhelm von Schadow, director of



5. *The Martyrdom of Jan Huss*, by Karl Friedrich Lessing (1808-1880), German. This painting by Leutze's Düsseldorf master was bought by the American Art-Union and exhibited in New York early in 1851. Critics compared it to *Washington Crossing the Delaware* and decided that the Washington "produced a grander, freer, more humane feeling." Lessing's picture was considered to be "German-idealistic," while Leutze's was called "American-naturalistic." Oil on canvas. Dated 1850. Nationalgalerie, Berlin

the Academy. Such early success persuaded Leutze that history painting would be his profession.

Leutze chose the Düsseldorf Academy because it was the best-known training ground in Europe for history painting. The Academy was founded in 1767 and originally taught artists to paint in the rococo style; but the disruptions of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars caused the removal from Düsseldorf to Munich of the important picture collection belonging to the Grand Dukes of Berg. The Academy, which had little to offer except the collection, was of small importance thereafter until 1815, when the Grand Duchy of Berg was annexed by Prussia, and it was decided to rehabilitate the school. Peter Cornelius, a leading member of the Brotherhood of Saint Luke, generally known as the Nazarenes, came as the first new director, but he was quickly followed in 1826 by a fellow

Nazarene, Wilhelm von Schadow. The Nazarenes, a radical group of German Roman Catholic artists who gathered in Rome during the opening decades of the century, attempted to revive the greatness and religiosity of Italian fifteenth-century painting and to revive the studio practices of that time. According to their theory, the artists, including fledglings, worked together in a master's atelier, learning the craft by direct imitation of one another and the master. Such an anti-academic approach was contrary to the current and dominant French method of training beginners to draw from plaster casts and live models before they were allowed to use paint itself under the direction of a master. Schadow combined both methods of training in his new rules for the Düsseldorf Academy, published in 1831: beginning students drew before casts and sculptures; they then graduated to drawing live models as well; after this they could join more advanced classes that taught the use of paint and the organization of large compositions. Only a few of the best students were admitted to the *Meisterklassen*, where the professors worked closely with them. The Schadow system flourished and became the pattern for mid-nineteenth-century academies.

In the *Artist-Life or Sketches of American Painters*, 1847, Henry Tuckerman quoted a letter from Leutze that provided an accurate description of the Academy as it operated, and of Leutze's attitude toward it: "For the beginner in the arts, Düsseldorf is probably one of the very best schools now in existence, and has educated an uncommon number of distinguished men. The brotherly feeling which exists among the artists is quite cheering, and only disturbed by their speculative dissensions. Two parties divide the school—the one actuated by a severe and almost bigoted Catholic tendency, at the head of which stands the Director of the Academy; and the other by a free and essentially Protestant spirit, of which Lessing is the chief representative. The consistency and severity in the mechanical portion of the art taught at this school, are carried into theory, and have led, by order and arrangement, to a classifi-

cation of the subjects, which is of essential service; and soon confirmed me in the conviction that a thorough treatment of a picture required that the anecdote should not be so much the subject, as the means of conveying some one clear idea, which is to be the inspiration of the picture. But the artist, as a poet, should first form the clear thought as the groundwork, and then adopt or create some anecdote from history or life, since painting can be but partially narrative and is essentially a contemplative art." Leutze was also clearly dissatisfied with the stylistic characteristics of the school—as seen in the work of such nearly forgotten artists as Hildebrandt, Clasen, Hasenclever, Achenbach, Boser, Camphausen, or Leu—which were then boasted of by school representatives: "perfect fidelity to nature, in form, color, and expression: minuteness in detail, delicacy of finish, and perfectness in rendering the language of every subject." Leutze, contrary to these practices, was notable among this company for the rapidity with which he worked and the relatively little attention he lavished on detailed finish.

In his search for a grander and freer style than was taught in Düsseldorf, Leutze went to Munich in 1842 to study the grandiose religious and historical productions of Peter Cornelius and Wilhelm von Kaulbach. More important than their stylistic example or that of Michelangelo, which he subsequently encountered in Italy, was the gradual realization of what type of history pieces he wanted to paint. During a six-month sojourn in the Swabian Alps after leaving Munich, Leutze articulated his dream: "There [the Alps] the romantic ruins of what were once free cities . . . in which a few hardy, persevering burghers bade defiance to their noble oppressors . . . led me to think how glorious had been the course of freedom from those small isolated manifestations of the love of liberty to where it has unfolded all its splendor in the institutions of our own country. . . . This course represented itself in pictures to my mind, forming a long cycle, from the first dawning of free institutions in the middle ages, to the reformation and revolution in England, the causes of

emigration, including the discovery and settlement of America, the early protestation against tyranny, to the Revolution and Declaration of Independence." And thus, in the years before the Washington Crossing the Delaware, the painter turned out a seemingly endless succession of history pieces: *The Parting of Sir Walter Raleigh and His Wife*, *The Mission of the Jews to Ferdinand and Isabella*, *Cromwell and His Daughter*, *John Knox Preaching to Queen Mary*, *The Court of Henry VIII*, *The Escape of the Puritans*, *The Capture of Teocalli*, *Columbus Received at Barcelona*, and others, including an additional group of Columbus pictures. By the time Leutze had returned to Düsseldorf in 1845, he was a famous painter and was accepted as

6. *The Düsseldorf Artists – Lunchtime in the Forest*, by Friedrich Boser (1809-1881), German. This group portrait – almost a "corporation piece" – was exhibited in New York by the Düsseldorf Gallery for a number of years after 1850. The artists are shown at the end of a shooting match won by Lessing, the white-coated figure in the center, who also painted the landscape. Leutze inspects his rifle to the right of the central group. The whereabouts of the picture is unknown. From *Gems from the Düsseldorf Gallery* (New York, 1863)



a leader in the school. He was free to paint his political ideals into his pictures, which he did; but he went further than that during those turbulent times, as James Flexner relates in *That Wilder Image*: "During the troubles of 1848, he led in organizing the artists' club, *Der Malkasten* (the palette), that subsequently dominated Düsseldorf life, and he was a captain of the mob from the studios that had broken the town's ancient quiet with cries urging a united and democratic Germany." The August 1849 *Bulletin of the American Art-Union* alluded to Leutze's activities: "He has been somewhat interrupted in his pursuits by the political difficulties which for a year or two past have

disturbed the community of Düsseldorf." The artist's political leanings, made so clear through his actions and his art, again manifested themselves during Leutze's visit to New York in 1851. In November he led a committee of artists, including John F. Kensett, Louis Lang, T. Addison Richards, Thomas Hicks, T. P. Rossiter, and Sanford R. Gifford, in honoring the radical Hungarian nationalist Louis Kossuth, a recent exile to this country. The group offered to lend its aid in designing for the room where a civic banquet was to be given for Kossuth "a tableau, allegorical and typical of the occasion, or in decorating the hall in such a way as they [the artists] may deem most suitable and

7. *The Death of Wolfe*, by Benjamin West (1738-1820), American. West depicted the dying moments of the British general at the Battle of Quebec in 1759, when the British dashed French hopes for the control of Canada. Critics said the picture was "very ridiculous to exhibit heroes in coats, breeches, and cock'd hats," rather than in classic Roman garb. The artist convinced George III that his treatment was appropriate, and when the king ordered a copy, the fashion for modern dress in history paintings was set. Oil on canvas, 59½ x 84 inches. Signed and dated at lower right: B. West. PINXIT. / 1770. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Canadian War Memorials Collection



proper for the time.” Against such a background Leutze takes on the appearance of a political activist, especially from the viewpoint of the European governments of the day. The Prussian governors of Düsseldorf and Berg must have felt a certain uneasiness as Leutze’s fame and the fame of his Washington Crossing the Delaware spread, while in this country his sentiments and those of his painting seemed highly commendable. Indeed, the obvious acceptability of the ideas represented in the Washington have helped make it the political icon that it is.

The painting depicts the pivotal action on Christmas night, 1776, when Washington led his dispirited army from across the Delaware River to Trenton to attack the Hessian encampment early on December 26. Colonel Henry Knox (who was in direct command of the troops, and later became Washington’s Secretary of War) wrote to his wife about the crossing two days later: “. . . a party of the army consisting of about 2,500 or 3,000 passed the river on Christmas night, with almost infinite difficulty, with eighteen field pieces. The floating ice in the river made the labor almost incredible. However, perseverance accomplished. About two o’clock the troops were all on the Jersey side; we then were about nine miles from the object. The night was cold and stormy; it hailed with great violence; the troops marched with the most profound silence and good order.” The army completely surprised the groggy Hessians, and the ensuing battle lasted only forty-five minutes. The Hessian commander, Colonel Rall, was mortally wounded in the action and almost one thousand of his men were taken prisoner, while the Americans suffered only two deaths from freezing and three wounded. The importance of the victory at Trenton, and one shortly after that at Princeton, was more psychological than military, for morale soared within the American army. Nicholas Cresswell, an Englishman, wrote about the Americans in his diary: “The minds of the people are much altered. A few days ago they had given up the cause for lost. Their late successes have turned the scale and now they are all liberty mad again . . .

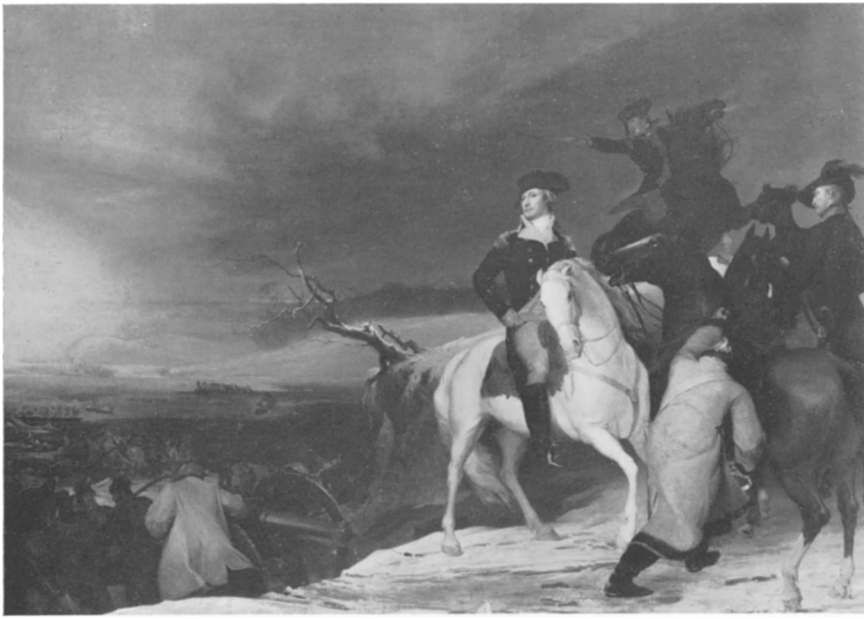


8. *Capture of the Hessians at Trenton*, by John Trumbull (1756-1843), American. This is one of the series of oil sketches, done during the 1780s and 90s, of important Revolutionary War scenes that established Trumbull as a pioneer of history painting in America. The acute observation of detail and sophisticated composition were characteristic of these paintings, which were circulated as engravings and thus would have been available to the aspiring Leutze. Oil on canvas, 21 x 31 inches. Yale University Art Gallery

they have recovered their panic and it will not be an easy matter to throw them into that confusion again.”

Such was the event and its deeper significance that Leutze attempted to portray. The artist has often been criticized by some for lack of accuracy in depicting the scene, and by others for being too photographic. As a document the picture is inaccurate, and it has provided considerable amusement to generations of American history students and others who take pleasure in counting the errors: the Durham iron-ore boats used in the crossing were far larger and clumsier than the light craft shown by Leutze; Washington should be shown seated, not “rocking the boat”; the officers and men are too well dressed and the uniforms they are wearing are incorrect; the horses and fieldpieces were brought over after, not with, the men; and the flag shown was not adopted until six months later.

Listing the inaccuracies and criticizing him



9. *Passage of the Delaware*, by Thomas Sully (1783-1872), American. Completed in 1819, this is possibly the largest and most successful representation of the subject before Leutze produced his. Although he may have seen the painting or the print after it, Leutze was apparently not influenced by it, and chose not to de-emphasize the soldiers as Sully did. Leutze's composition lacks the beauty of Sully's, but he attempted a newer, less aristocratic interpretation, closer to the political realities of 1850. Oil on canvas, 12 feet 5 inches x 17 feet 4 inches. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of owners of Boston Museum

10. *Washington and Lafayette at Mount Vernon*, 1784, by Thomas P. Rossiter (1818-1871) and Louis R. Mignot (1831-1870), American. Washington is shown here in the role of country gentleman, welcoming Lafayette during his visit to the United States in 1784. Rossiter did the figures, and Mignot spent months gathering accurate sketches of the subjects and of the grounds at Mount Vernon. It was painted as part of a campaign to establish Mount Vernon as a historic shrine. Oil on canvas, 7 feet 3 inches x 12 feet 2½ inches. Signed at lower right: ROSSITER 1859; at lower left: MIGNOT. Bequest of William Nelson, 05.35



for over-attention to niggling detail, misses the whole intention of the artist and the meaning of the picture, particularly in view of Leutze's insistence that a picture should revolve about one central idea rather than concern itself with minutiae. Leutze had no desire to paint a thorough reconstruction of the scene – he was trying to capture the spirit of a great leader and the importance of a great event. In this respect Leutze returns to an earlier type of heroic history painting in America, as exemplified by West, Copley, Trumbull, the Peales, and Sully.

Benjamin West can be given more credit than any other artist for the revival of history painting in Europe, England, and America. West attempted to combine the compositional and stylistic methods of High Renaissance painting with historical subject matter. Through such works as the *Death of Wolfe*, which he regarded as a symbol of the English conquest of North America, West introduced contemporary events and dress into the genre, and made them acceptable. As expounded by West, the value of history painting lay in its ability to record accurately the noblest acts of man. From this attitude grew the largest number of history paintings, which came to be regarded as the highest form of art in the first half of the nineteenth century.

While Leutze's picture belongs to this heroic tradition (just as it shared in the later developments around Lessing and Kaulbach), it ran countercurrent to the type of history painting dominant in America in the 1850s. These "homey" compositions, which became very popular just before the Civil War, domesticated the hero, took him from the battlefield, and placed him in a setting that recalled the eighteenth-century conversation piece. It is in such subdued works as Junius Brutus Stearns's *Marriage of Washington to Martha Custis* and Rossiter and Mignot's *Washington and Lafayette at Mount Vernon* that the nonheroic trend reached its epitome in the United States.

When compared to such mild paintings as these, it is not hard to understand why

Leutze's Washington Crossing the Delaware generated such excitement. Its impact is summed up in the catalogue of its first New York showing in 1851: "This is a picture by the sight of which, in this weary and exhausted time, one can recover health and strength. . . . [it] has power to work upon the hearts, and inflame the spirits of all that behold it."

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"No impression here, however, was half so momentous as that of the epoch-making masterpiece of Mr. Leutze, which showed us Washington crossing the Delaware in a wondrous flare of projected gaslight and with the effect of a revelation to my young sight of the capacity of accessories to 'stand out.' I live again in the thrill of that evening – which was the greater of course for my feeling it, in my parents' company, when I should otherwise have been in bed. We went down, after dinner, in the Fourteenth Street stage, quite as if going to the theatre; the scene of exhibition was near the Stuyvesant Institute (a circumstance stirring up somehow a swarm of associations, echoes probably of lectures discussed at home, yet at which my attendance had doubtless conveniently lapsed), but Mr. Leutze's drama left behind any paler proscenium. We gaped responsive to every item, lost in the marvel of the wintry light, of the sharpness of the ice-blocks, of the sickness of the sick soldier, of the protrusion of the minor objects, that of the strands of the rope and the nails of the boots, that, I say, on the part of everything, of its determined purpose of standing out; but that, above all, of the profiled national hero's purpose, as might be said, of standing up, as much as possible, even indeed of doing it almost on one leg, in such difficulties, and successfully balancing. So memorable was that evening to remain for me that nothing could be more strange, in connection with it, than the illustration by the admired work, on its in after years again coming before me, of the cold cruelty with which time may turn and devour its children. The picture, more or less entombed in its relegation, was vividly dead – and that was bad enough. But half the substance of one's youth seemed buried with it."

HENRY JAMES, *A Small Boy and Others*

A Rich Harvest

From Taddeo Zuccaro to Erté, from Albrecht Dürer to Pablo Picasso – the range in time and artistic intention among the drawings, prints, and illustrated books presently on exhibition in the Prints and Drawings Galleries is enormous. Curious and instructive confrontations are possible; “Impossible Interviews” occur. This show reveals the startling variety of material acquired in the course of two typical and fortunate years by the Department of Drawings and the Department of Prints. In this period more than five thousand prints and drawings have come to the Museum by purchase, gift, and bequest. The works of art on view are a handsome token of the rich harvest that is available to students in the study rooms of the two departments.



ALBRECHT DÜRER (1471-1528), German. *Adam and Eve*. 1504. Engraving, 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Gift of Mrs. William H. Osborn in memory of Johnston L. Redmond, 67.679.4

This truly superb impression of Dürer's Adam and Eve, which shows the two figures as models of human beauty, reveals the artist as the supreme master of the technique of engraving, in which he renders this multitude of textures, from the craggy tree trunks to the furry cat. It is one of our most important acquisitions in recent years.

JACOB BEAN *Curator of Drawings*

JOHN J. MCKENDRY *Associate Curator in Charge of Prints*

GIOVANNI BATTISTA CRESPI, called IL CERANO (about 1557–1633), Italian. *St. Charles Borromeo*. Brush and tempera on paper, $18\frac{3}{16} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Rogers Fund, 67.97

The life and miracles of the great ecclesiastical reformer Charles Borromeo were passionately preferred subjects in Lombard painting. Borromeo had been named cardinal in 1549 at the age of twenty-two by his uncle Pius IV, then in 1564 appointed archbishop of Milan. He was canonized in 1610, twenty-six years after his death. In 1602 and 1603, even before the archbishop's official canonization, Cerano was given commissions to execute several enormous canvases for Milan Cathedral representing incidents from his life. This brush drawing representing Charles Borromeo standing, his right arm raised in benediction, may be related to these commissions. The figure is charged with an intense spiritual energy, largely communicated by the nervous, flickering highlights that model the forms.



PETER PAUL RUBENS (1577–1640), Flemish. *Three Standing Warriors*. Black and red chalk, pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white, $14\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{16}$ inches. Rogers Fund, 67.98

Like most great masters, Rubens borrowed extensively from the work of his predecessors, and the art of the Italian High Renaissance was a constant source of spiritual nourishment. Here he has turned to Raphael, freely copying three standing warriors that appear (facing to the left, not to the right as in this drawing) in Alexander Ordering Homer's *Iliad* Stored in a Persian Chest, a fresco in the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican. The reversal of the figures suggests that Rubens's immediate source for the motif was an anonymous engraving after the fresco in which, as so often in engraved copies, the direction of the original is reversed. Rubens is copying here, but the dynamic force of his genius transforms the original; Raphael's figures become pure Rubens.





EUGÈNE DELACROIX (1798-1863), French. Royal Tiger. 1829. Lithograph, 13 x 18 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches. Bequest of Susan Dwight Bliss, 67.630.7

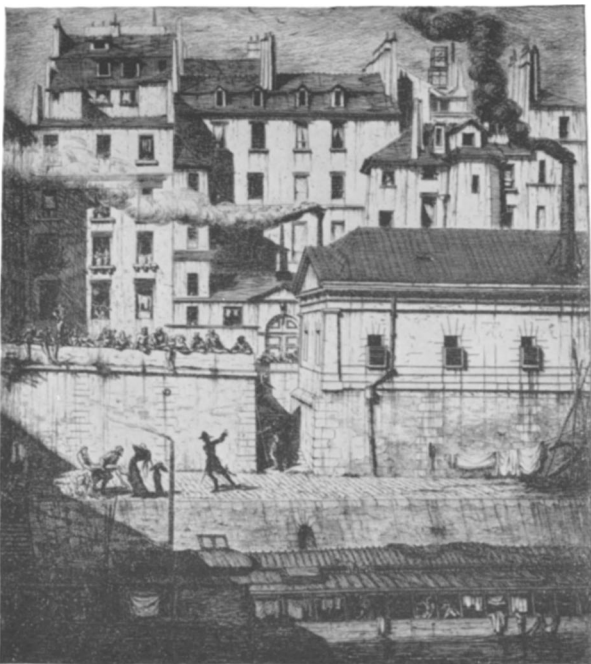
The rich, velvety tone of lithography was particularly suited to Delacroix's depiction of a tiger. Though posed in a landscape suggestive of Africa, the lithograph was done from studies of a tiger in the Paris zoo, before Delacroix's first trip to Morocco in 1829.

MARCO RICCI (1676-1727), Italian. *River Landscape*. Gouache on goatskin, $10\frac{13}{16} \times 17\frac{5}{16}$ inches. Rogers Fund, 67.67

Marco Ricci, whose specialty was landscape painting and drawing, produced a great many views in brilliant gouache on goatskin. They have been much appreciated in England, where Marco had worked as a scene painter for several years from 1708; the largest group of these gouaches is in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. Marco's landscapes are usually what the eighteenth-century Venetians called *vedute ideate*, imaginary views, and only occasionally *vedute prese dai luoghi*, views made on the spot. This fine open landscape probably belongs to the second category. It could be a view of the valley of the river Piave as it joins the Venetian plain, after having flowed past Marco's hometown, Belluno.

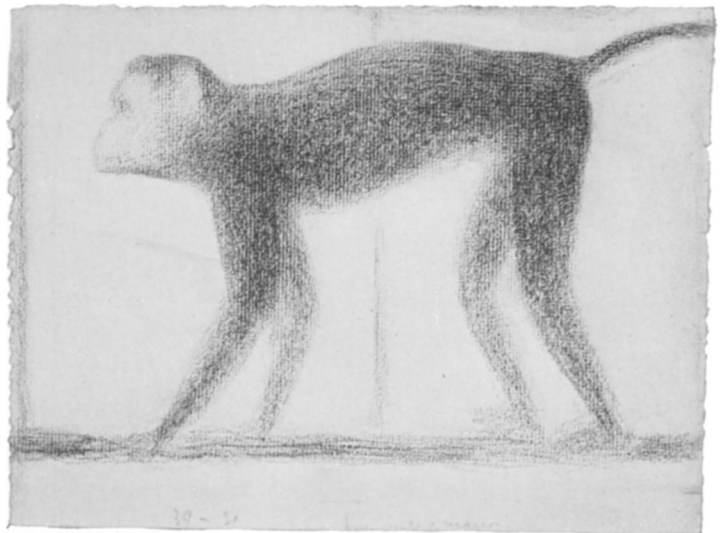
CHARLES MERYON (1821-1868), French. *The Morgue*, from "Eaux-Fortes sur Paris," a set of 22 etchings. Etching, $8\frac{11}{16} \times 7\frac{5}{8}$ inches. Bequest of Susan Dwight Bliss, 67.630.8

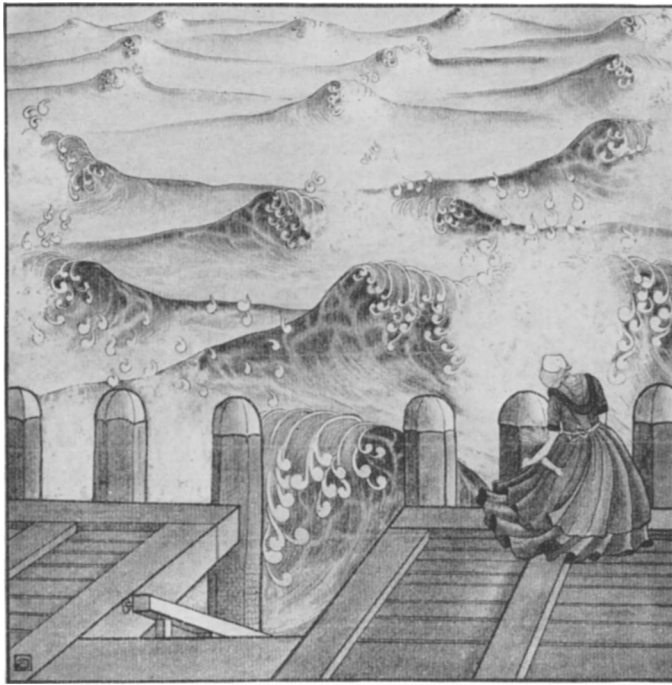
In a series of rather morbid etchings, Meryon depicted Paris at that strange moment in history when so much was being destroyed by Haussman to make her the most beautiful city in the world. We are fortunate to have acquired a group of twenty-six of these etchings, all fine impressions; several are unique proofs with corrections in pencil by the artist.



GEORGES SEURAT (1859-1891), French. *Monkey: study for La Grande Jatte*. Conté crayon, $7 \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot (1876-1967), 67.187.35

Fortunately, Seurat's very considerable natural gifts as a painter and draughtsman could transform his elaborate, would-be scientific theories of art into highly convincing pictorial results. *La Grande Jatte*—more fully, *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte*—now in the Chicago Art Institute, is the first and most celebrated monument to his pointillist theory and technique. In 1885 Seurat worked intensely on this picture, which represents Sunday strollers on an island in the Seine; in preparing the work, he made twenty-nine drawings and thirty-three oil sketches. The monkey in our new drawing appears at the right in the picture, its leash held by a lady who is studied in another drawing already in the Metropolitan Museum. The rich conté crayon Seurat favored for his drawings is used with great authority and economy to suggest a solid form modeled by enveloping light, and the monkey emerges as a kind of hieratic symbol, almost like a piece of Egyptian sculpture.



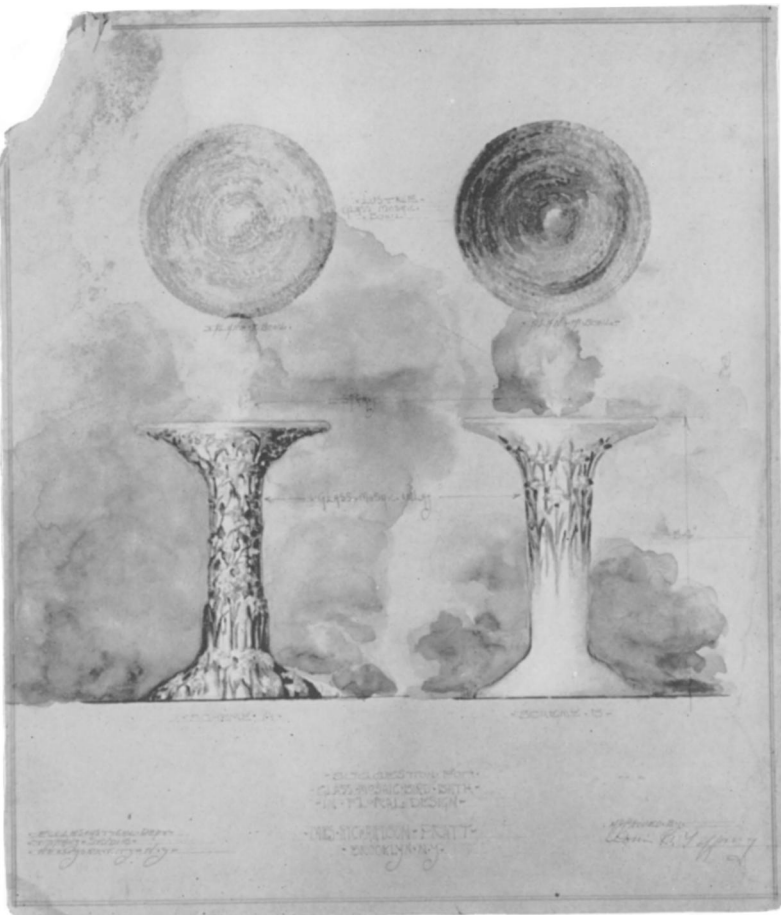


FRANZ M. MELCHERS (born 1868), Flemish. Illustration from *L'An* (Brussels, 1897), poems by Thomas Braun. 9 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches. The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 67.763.1

L'An, a book of poems by Thomas Braun illustrated by Franz Melchers, is one of the most extravagant and least-known examples of art nouveau book illustration. This lithograph is for the following poem:

LES TEMPÊTES DE MARS
L'âpre Aquilon soulève les flots gris,
Les flot jaunes, les flot verts dont l'écume
Va s'écraser contre les pilotis
De la jetée, avec un bruit d'enclume.
Et, secoués par l'eau qui les parfume,
Sous le ciel bas aux nuages croulants,
Branlent les bois noircis et ruisselants
Dans la pluie et le choc des vagues glauques
Où passe le vol fou des goëlands
Epouvantant les airs de leurs cris rauques.

("Borne up by acid Aquilon, the floods
Are yellow, gray, and black.
Thudding the wharf, the spume
Beats to an anvil sound.
Under the lowered sky and soggy clouds
Black, drenched branches move
In the rain and glaucous waves;
Gulls in crazed flight pass,
Ravaging the heavens
With their bitter cry.")



LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY (1848-1933), American. Design for a birdbath for Mrs. Richardson Pratt. Watercolor, 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Gift of Walter Hoving, 67.654.1

The Tiffany studio produced more than the lamps and glass for which it is best known today. This project for a birdbath is only one of some five hundred recently acquired drawings by this inventive American designer. These drawings, which show the range of Tiffany's work, enrich the Museum's growing collection of ornament and architectural material.



PABLO PICASSO (born 1881), Spanish. *Standing Female Figure*. Watercolor, $24\frac{3}{16} \times 16$ inches. Anonymous gift in memory of Dr. Avrom Barnett, 67.162

Picasso the sculptor is at work here, constructing a powerful, even savage, female figure out of concave and convex elements. The complex completed form has great weight, but a wild abandon in the upstretched arms. Picasso the painter is at work too, for the overall design reads as a most satisfying abstract composition. This watercolor is part of a group of studies for the painting *Les Trois Femmes*, now in Moscow. The studies and the painting date from 1908, and show Picasso still strongly influenced by the primitive Iberian and Negro sculpture that made his 1907 *Demoiselles d'Avignon* the starting point for cubism, the great pictorial revolution of the twentieth century.

ERTÉ (ROMAIN DE TIRTOFF) (born 1892 in Russia), French. *Le Décolleté d'aujourd'hui*, number 2 from *Les Décolletés*, 1925. Gouache, $10\frac{5}{8} \times 14\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Gift of Jane Martin Ginsburg, President of the Martin Foundation, 67.762.1

Erté, the fashion designer who best conveys the spirit of the 1920s, is now represented in the collection by a large group of drawings for the theater, illustrations for *Harper's Bazaar* covers, and dress, shoe, and jewelry designs.



1. *Max Schmitt in a Single Scull*, by Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), American. Signed and dated 1871. Oil on canvas, 32½ x 46¼ inches. Alfred N. Punnett Fund and Gift of George D. Pratt, 34-92



“The Champion Single Sculls”



2. *Max Schmitt, possibly at twenty*. Photograph from Max Schmitt's daughter

After studying in Europe for nearly four years, the twenty-six-year-old Thomas Eakins returned to Philadelphia, his birthplace, in 1870, where he spent the rest of his life depicting the realities of his milieu with great force and beauty.

It has been thought that the first public exhibition of his work took place in 1874, but recently discovered evidence makes it clear that his first showing occurred nearly three years earlier, in 1871. This showing was not held in the place one would expect – the Academy of Fine Arts, the center of the Philadelphia art scene. The Academy had closed in 1870, preparatory to reopening in a new and larger building. While the Academy was being “torn out,” the Union League Club, in its august fastness on South Broad Street, decided that something should be done in the way of art exhibitions to fill the gap. The League leapt into the breach with the “First

Art Reception of the Union League,” held during the evenings of December 8, 9, and 10, 1870. More than forty artists were shown, mostly Philadelphians, but Eakins was not among them. Another exhibition was announced for the following January; it did not actually open until February 9, when 113 artists were represented – but still no Eakins, although the work of many of his friends, including his Academy teacher, Christian Schuéssele, elicited much favorable comment in the local papers. “There was hardly one in the whole collection that was not well worthy of praise,” *The Press* of February 13 commented.

The winter continued without a suggestion that an artist named Thomas Eakins lived in the city, until April 26, 1871, when the League’s third and final exhibition opened. There two Eakins works, called “Portrait” and “The Champion Single Sculls,” were included, thus qualifying for the distinction of

being the artist's first publicly exhibited works. Their primacy is confirmed by *The Daily Evening Telegraph* of April 29, 1876, where Eakins was described as "a thoroughly accomplished artist who has, during the four or five years that have lapsed since he first exhibited in Philadelphia at one of the Union League receptions, been steadily growing."

Can the two Eakins pictures shown in the League exhibition be identified with paintings known today? The "Portrait" cannot. The exhibition catalogue lists it as being owned by "M. H. Messhert." We know from other sources that the Messcherts were friends of the Eakinses, and it is certainly possible that this portrait was of Mr. Messchert himself—perhaps Eakins's first commission. Be that as it may, today this portrait cannot be found among the artist's catalogued works, and seems to be lost.

"The Champion Single Sculls," however, may very probably be the picture now in the Metropolitan Museum, called Max Schmitt in a Single Scull (Figure 1). The reviews of the League picture strongly suggest the Museum's painting. *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* reported: "There are other portraits, by Sully, Rehen, Mrs. Holmes, Street and Thomas Eakins. The latter artist, who has lately returned from Europe and the influence of Gérôme, has also a picture entitled 'The Champion Single Sculls' (No. 137), which, though peculiar, has more than ordinary interest. The artist, in dealing so boldly and broadly with the commonplace in nature, is working upon well-supported theories, and despite a somewhat scattered effect, gives promise of a conspicuous future. . . . A walnut frame would greatly improve the present work." The *Inquirer's* critic was less impressed: "Thomas Eakins shows two," he wrote, "a portrait and a river scene, entitled 'The Champion Sculls.' While manifesting a marked ability, especially in the painting of the rower in the foreground, the whole effect is scarcely satisfactory. The light on the water, on the rower and on the trees lining the bank indicates that the sun is blazing fiercely, but on looking upward one perceives a curiously dull leaden sky."

It is clear, however, that Max Schmitt in a Single Scull is not a summer scene. The trees are bare or brown-leaved, indicating an afternoon in late fall or early spring. The picture, dated 1871, might have been begun the preceding autumn, planned for the League's February exhibition, which, even more than the December show, stressed the work of local artists, but was only finished in time for the April show.

Eakins often went sculling on the Schuylkill with his friend Max Schmitt (Figure 2), whose wife was a penmanship pupil of Eakins's father. In fact, the occupant of the second scull in the Metropolitan's painting (Figure 3) is Eakins himself. He was not a "champion," although Schmitt was: Schmitt was listed as the single scull champion of the "Schuylkill Navy" in *The Rowing and Athletic Manual for 1875*. Sculling had long engaged—and still engages—the particular attention of Philadelphians, and was a favorite subject for Eakins throughout his career: he painted at least fourteen sculling pictures. It is appropriate that this scene should have been one of the first two pictures to bring his name to public attention.

GORDON HENDRICKS

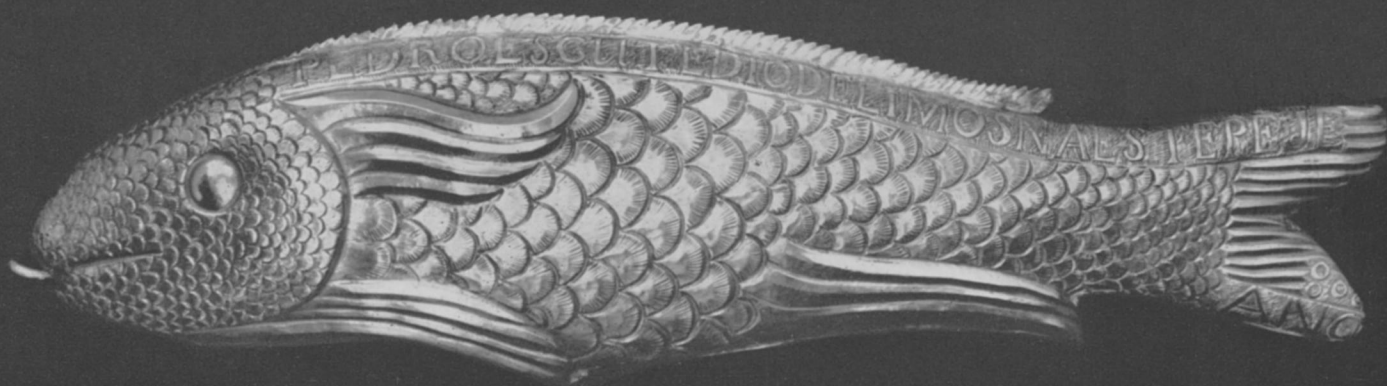


3. Self-portrait by Eakins. The scull is signed "EAKINS 1871."
Detail of Figure 1

Peruvian Silver: 1532-1900

When the conquering Spaniards arrived in Peru in the sixteenth century, they found a well-established tradition of fine metalwork in gold and silver. They were able to improve mining methods and the extraction of silver from its ores, but their artisans offered little beyond new designs and the use of filigree and enamel to the skilled craftsmen the Inca had assembled at Cuzco.

The Conquest affected the silversmiths less than most other Indian groups. They merely switched from being full-time government employees working exclusively for the Inca to become members of the new guilds, on a par with Spanish and Creole smiths, and the heredi-



*Fish, the symbol of St. Peter.
Peruvian, dated 1800. Raised and
stamped silver, length 16½ inches.
Convent of Sto. Domingo,
Lambayeque*

tary father and son aspect of the craft was replaced by the European master and apprentice system. Peru continued its pre-Conquest role as the principal source of fine silverwork in the New World.

The churches and convents, the viceroys, and the leading Spanish and Creole families became the new consumers, taking the places of the Indian temples and the Inca's retinue. As our visitors will see in an exhibition opening here on March 14, the new products created over the next three centuries cover an extremely wide range, including liturgical objects, columns and other architectural elements, candelabra, household articles, stirrups, spurs, and horse trappings. Stylistically these objects run from very ornate Iberian to what may be termed a heavy or massive Creole style. There is also a mestizo variant, which utilized exotic local plant and animal forms as decorative elements in an otherwise European design.

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