

The Art Institute of Chicago

Exhibition of the Ryerson Gift

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"MADONNA ENTHRONED WITH SAINTS AND DONOR," ATTRIBUTED TO SEGNA DI BONAVENTURA, SIENESE, FLOURISHED 1298-1327. THE MR. AND MRS. MARTIN A. RYERSON COLLECTION

EXHIBITION OF THE RYERSON GIFT

FROM January 26 to January 31 Members of the Art Institute and their guests are invited to a pre-view of paintings, sculpture, Oriental and decorative arts which are the bequest of Martin A. Ryerson. At Mr. Ryerson's death five years ago the entire art collection was willed to the Institute with the provision that Mrs. Ryerson retain the life use of the objects in the residence. With her passing last September these paintings and art objects in the

house now become the property of the museum and will eventually be placed in the historical sequence to which they belong. Before that is done, this exhibit has been arranged to show not only the range of the Ryersons' collecting but their extraordinary generosity as well. Another interest attaches itself to this special installation. Many of the paintings, wood-carvings and ceramics have been together for a lifetime. It seems fitting, before they become a part of the permanent collection, that Chicago appreciate them as a group, as another example of the remarkable taste and discrimination which Mr. and Mrs. Ryerson displayed in their long years of collecting. *January 26 to January 31, Gallery G-58 (East Wing Galleries.) Admission by Membership card at East end of Gunsaulus Hall.*

PAINTINGS IN THE RYERSON GIFT

With a few exceptions the most important additions to the Ryerson Collection at the Institute lie in the field of painting. Among the thirty-seven examples in tempera and oil and the eight in water color and pastel are a number of significant early panels and nineteenth century works. Again one is struck by the collectors' enthusiasm for the primitives and moderns; not one of these pictures belongs to the later sixteenth, seventeenth or eighteenth century. In general the Ryersons avoided the Renaissance; the few seventeenth century panels (chiefly Dutch) and the later Italian works (the Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, the Tiepolos, etc.) were lent to the museum while the earlier and later works were kept at home. Color in the primitives, color in the nineteenth century French school—this was an element highly esteemed by them. Clarity of design had its place, too, and always of course, "good painting," good in the sense of being sensi-

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JANUARY NINETEEN THIRTY-EIGHT



"AT THE PIANO," PAINTING BY AUGUSTE RENOIR, FRENCH 1841-1919. INCLUDED IN THE BEQUEST OF MARTIN A. RYERSON AND SHOWN IN THE EXHIBITION OF THE RYERSON COLLECTION FOR MEMBERS, JANUARY 26-JANUARY 31

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tive, unaffected and skilled. Through this group—as in the pictures already in the museum—runs an experimental strain, a desire to appreciate the new and as yet unaccepted.

ITALIAN PRIMITIVES

Sixteen Italian paintings, dating from the early fourteenth century to the early sixteenth, are particularly welcome at this moment when early Italian works are practically unprocurable. To the collection that still lacks a Duccio (and unfortunately may continue to lack one for a long time) the brilliant small panel of the "Enthroned Madonna with Saints" given to Duccio's close follower, Segna di Bonaventura, is a splendid addition. The linear grace, the decorative elegance, the exquisite color of the early Siense school are all here. Though neither Jacopo di Cione nor Niccolò di Pietro Gerini can be numbered among the greatest Florentine artists of the second half of the fourteenth century, Madonnas by both these artists in the Ryerson gift are valuable in showing the persistence of Giotto's tradition. The more important of the two, by Niccolò, has a certain early *trecento* character, dependent—as Richard Offner has pointed out—upon Bernardo Daddi's interpretation of Giotto.

The most fascinating later Italian work is undoubtedly the *tondo* showing the "Adoration of the Magi" attributed (not unanimously) to Botticini. Though deriving from Botticelli's inventions, this panel, crowded with incident and expressing the new delight in classic architecture, is far from being one of those spiritless replicas executed in great profusion in Botticelli's workshop. Another *tondo*, assigned to Sebastiano Mainardi, a typical "Marriage of St. Catherine" by Francia and a tall figure of "St. Catherine" by Lo Spagna, in which this competent—but often dull—follower of Perugino outdoes himself by suddenly adding a new monumentality to Umbrian sweetness—such works broaden the Italian section of the Institute and supply missing links in the whole chain of development.

FRENCH MODERNS

In the nineteenth century French field—already so greatly enriched through the gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Ryerson—there are several remarkable canvases. As the early Italian subjects of Corot loom larger in modern painting, it is important they be well represented. Corot's "View of Genoa" (1834) is a delightful small composition, secure and delicate in its painting, the motif of white and grey roofs against



"ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA" BY LO SPAGNA (GIOVANNI DI PIETRO), UMBRIAN, ABOUT 1450-1528. THE MR. AND MRS. MARTIN A. RYERSON COLLECTION

the Mediterranean sky built into a nearly abstract design. Four paintings by Renoir, added to the works by this master already in the Ryerson, Palmer, and Coburn Collections, will permit the installation of an almost complete gallery of his work—unique among public collections. Of the famous "At the Piano" which many guests in the Ryerson home remember as hanging above their piano (it seemed to express the very essence of music) little new can be said. Painted in 1879 at the height of his Impressionism, it is a radiant example more than able to hold its own in a room already noted for superb canvases by its painter. The "Young Woman in Pink," the "Young Woman Seated," and the portrait of the "Artist's Son, Jean" (as a child) are useful in showing other sides of Renoir's multiple genius. In the same way the Institute, though possessing significant works by Degas, has lacked, so far, one of those broad, brilliant pastels done after he had given up oil. "La Toilette," a motif to which he often returned, excellently represents this period, while two other pastels, "Dancers" and "Dancers in the Wings," amplify, rather than repeat, similar subjects in the permanent collection.

Manet's "Bull Fight," painted in 1866 after his return from Spain and one of his most dashing smaller canvases, and Manet's "Young Woman with a Round Hat," finished about 1879, well illustrate progressive phases of this painter's Impressionism. Where the Cézanne landscape, recently identified by Lionello Venturi as the "House of Doctor Gachet at Auvers," makes an interesting comparison with the panoramic view of the same village in the Coburn Collection (both dating from 1873), a water color of "The Pistachio Tree at the Château Noir" represents the powerful later development of Cézanne and is the first work of this 1895-1900 period to enter the museum. The Ryersons' interest in nineteenth century French painting included some of the "little masters" of the circle, none more charmingly represented than Lépine. "The Courtyard of a House" shows Lépine close to Corot.

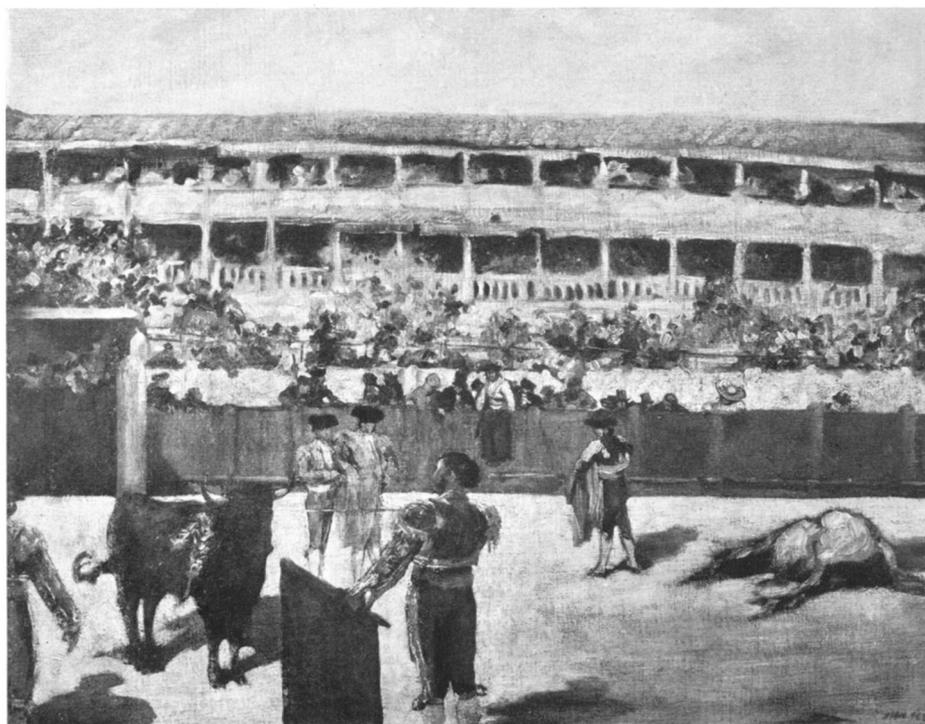
Now on exhibition are several paintings by Albert André from the Ryerson Collection but "By the Sea," where the Impressionist formula is freshly employed, strikes a note of great charm in the work of this artist. Redon, Puvis de Chavannes, Sisley, Alfred Stevens and a group of lesser Impressionists help to make the modern French group one of the most notable in the gift.

PAINTINGS BY AMERICANS

Winslow Homer's monumental conception, "The Herring Net" (done in 1885), dominates the American acquisitions. In it the Institute possesses an oil by Homer worthy to rank with the great series of water colors already in the Ryerson Collection. At the residence on Drexel Boulevard this painting hung alone in the dining-room and one never tired of commenting on how the artist had subdued the individuality of these figures to the larger drama of man against the sea, and had carried out the whole design in expressive surfaces of oil paint not too common in Homer's art. To the large series of paintings by Arthur B. Davies are added some especially charming examples: "Our River Hudson" (1903) shows this versatile painter somewhat dependent upon American folk art which he discovered a generation or two ahead of the recent boom in "native primitives" while "Silver Spring" (1910) and "Enchanted Woods" (1915) fuse a complex of traditions: Persian miniatures, Giorgione, even the sketches of Whistler and the frail ladies of Thomas Dewing. A different sort of lyricism—one more definitely connected with the land—is found in Twachtman's "White Bridge." He painted this motif from his Connecticut home several times; never was it more freshly seen, more deftly set down. Aside from Davies few twentieth-century Americans found their way into the Ryerson Collection. Exceptions in the present case are Maurice Sterne, here with a brilliant oil sketch, "On the Ganges," and Kenneth Hayes Miller whose romantic early canvas "The River" is one of the outstanding examples of this painter's career.



"THE HERRING NET," PAINTING BY WINSLOW HOMER, AMERICAN, 1836-1910. THE MR. AND MRS. MARTIN A. RYERSON COLLECTION. HOMER'S FAVORITE SUBJECT MATTER OF MAN AGAINST THE SEA PAINTED WITH TREMENDOUS POWER.



"BULL FIGHT," PAINTING BY ÉDOUARD MANET, FRENCH, 1832-1883. THE MR. AND MRS. MARTIN A. RYERSON COLLECTION. MANET HERE CHALLENGES GOYA IN THIS IMPRESSION OF THE BULL RING DONE AFTER A VISIT TO SPAIN IN 1865.