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The Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection

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THE CHARLES H. AND MARY F. S. WORCESTER COLLECTION

Although Mr. and Mrs. Worcester presented their entire collection to The Art Institute in 1947, some fifty paintings and a few drawings and pieces of sculpture remained in their house during the rest of their lifetime. They were most generous in admitting visitors to see their collection but during their last years illness prevented their receiving guests. With Mr. Worcester's death on March 23, 1956 (his wife having predeceased him by nearly two years), the collection was turned over to The Art Institute.

An extraordinary breadth and diversity of interest is apparent in the Worcester Collection, which extends from an early 15th century Austrian panel to a watercolor by Georges Rouault. In making purchases the Worcesters were guided first of all by personal taste and an eye for quality; secondly they always kept in mind the needs of The Art Institute.

The Austrian panel, a tiny Christ Bearing the Cross, rich in color and dramatic in presentation, is a rare example by an unknown artist who has been given the designation Master of the Worcester Panel. An Austrian Crucifixion of the late 15th century brings another fine example of this school of painting, so seldom found in American museums. One of the paintings most highly prized by the Worcesters is The Rommelpot Player, a panel by Frans Hals, lively in subject and executed with typical dash and bravura. Particularly welcome is The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis, a Rubens sketch of superb quality, rich and colorful, monumental in design.

Small paintings by Giuseppe Crespi and Pietro Longhi afford charming glimpses of the more intimate side of the Italian 18th century,

while the French 19th century is revealed through a Monet seascape, Auguste Renoir's The Laundress and a brilliantly organized oil sketch, Dancers in the Foyer, by Degas. Two sensitively painted interiors by Edouard Vuillard and a vibrant Landscape by Chaim Soutine illustrate later developments in the French School.

Ralph Blakelock's semi-mystic Vision of Life was sympathetically placed in the Worcesters' living room with two romantic compositions by Adolphe Monticelli. At the other end of the room hung an unfinished, almost monochromatic oil by George Inness. America's leading woman painter, Mary Cassatt, was represented in the collection with three paintings, the most important of which, Young Woman Sewing, shows her at her best.

Mr. Worcester, who was himself an amateur painter, looked at pictures with the sensitive eye of an artist. He was ever interested in the manner in which artists of different centuries or different countries resolved their pictorial problems, and was fascinated by the jewel-like colors of his early 15th century Austrian panel, the subtly suffused light in the Crespi, the intricacies of color and pattern in his Vuillards or the bold brush strokes of Hals. The paintings which he enjoyed having around him were for the most part small, some were by great names but often they were by men of lesser fame, and the subjects were, like himself, unpretentious. Quality was maintained to a high degree but above all the assembling of the collection was guided by the Worcesters' own personal and individual taste.

FREDERICK A. SWEET



The Rommelpot Player, oil on panel (15 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ "), by Frans Hals (1580–1666)
Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection



Unknown Master, low German, ca. 1470. The Man of Sorrows with Four Angels dotted print (metal cut) colored by hand in crimson lake, yellow and green. The only known impression of an important 15th century print which was acquired recently for the Clarence Buckingham Collection