
Progress Report First Semester 1968-69

Elvehjem Art Center

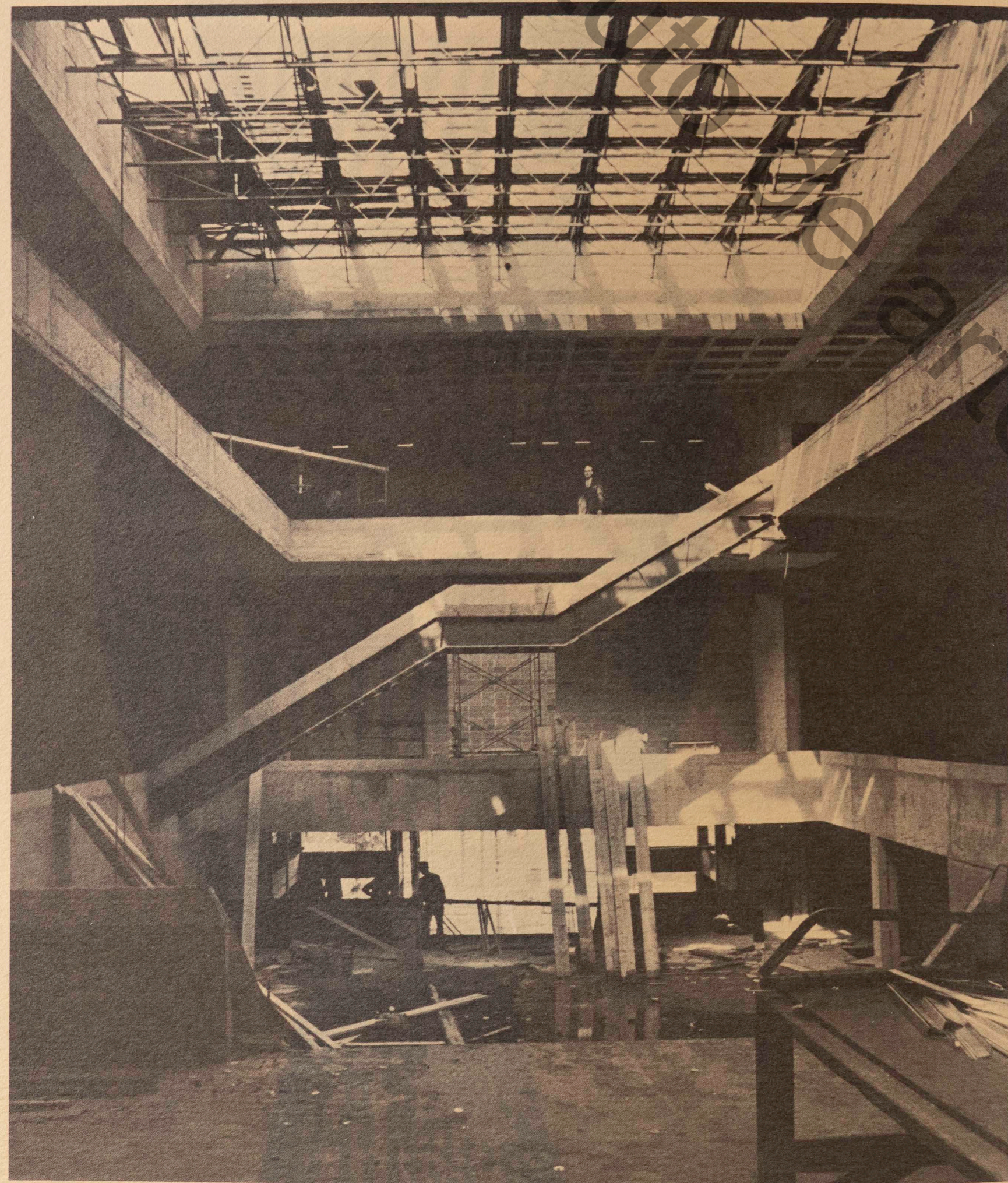
University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin



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The Del and Winifred Paige Court, with travertine-covered walls, opens dramatically to the skylight three stories above the floor level. Balcony areas indicate two full floors of exhibition space, the Thomas E. and Mary Clark Brittingham Galleries. Other details in this illustration to be noted are the coffered ceiling and stairway linking the fourth and fifth gallery floors.



Kohler Art Library

Within the Elvehjem Art Center, 12,500 square feet of space is designated as the Kohler Art Library, accommodating 70,000 volumes and 200 readers with an initial staff of two professionals and 6 sub-professionals. The dual function of art historical research library and museum reference center is served by the Kohler Art Library. As it begins operation, the library will house all of the 27,000 art volumes now held by the University's Memorial Library in its various collections, including its rare book art volumes. All of the scholarly works published in this country and abroad are received by automatic subscription. In support of this rapidly expanding acquisition policy, the library has drawn on Kress Foundation support and private contributions as well as State funds, according to William C. Bunce, Chief, Kohler Art Library. Supplementing the exhibition program, the Kohler Art Library will provide the "museum without walls" so necessary to the scholarly programs typical of the University community.

New Appointment

Arthur R. Blumenthal was appointed Curator, and he joined the staff in July, 1968. His activities will include research on the collections and future exhibitions, planning for activities in the Oscar F. and Louise Greiner Mayer Print and Drawing Center, writing for publications, and occasional gallery lectures. He also serves as Instructor in the Department of Art History.

Caring for the Print Collection

A major project involving the extensive print collection has been planned and is in its first stages. The entire collection of prints will be matted in rag-board mats (to prevent chemical damage to the prints) of standard sizes. Proper indexing, arranging, and storing the prints in standard size solander boxes will permit ready access by students, faculty, and other visitors utilizing the print study room. The extensive research and preliminary cataloguing has been undertaken by Law Watkins, Project Assistant, and the final cataloguing and records have been completed by the Registrar, Carlyn Mayer.

To Facilitate Study of the Collection

Our basic record on a work of art in the collection is the "collection sheet," and all documents pertaining to the object are kept by the Registrar in the extensive files under her supervision. To facilitate study of the collection by visitors, copies of these sheets will be available in the Kohler Art Library for reference.

The Need for Frames

It is customary for paintings purchased from dealers or acquired as gifts to be framed. However, a substantial number of paintings in the Elvehjem Art Center collection presently lack frames or the old frames need refurbishing. New frames must be selected to complement the paintings in design, style, and coloring. Several new frames were acquired last year, and it is planned that more will be obtained this year prior to the opening of the Elvehjem Art Center.

Auction Catalogues

As funds permit, the Elvehjem Art Center gradually is acquiring art auction catalogues from the important auction houses. Such references are necessary as research tools for students and staff; and because current catalogues indicate prices paid for works of art at public auction, they have special relevance in our continuing studies of insurance values, changing market trends, and availability of objects. Also, these catalogues bring to our attention certain works of art on which we may bid for purchase. The growing inventory of these art auction catalogues is supervised by our Department Secretary, Ruth Jackson.

Conservation Activities

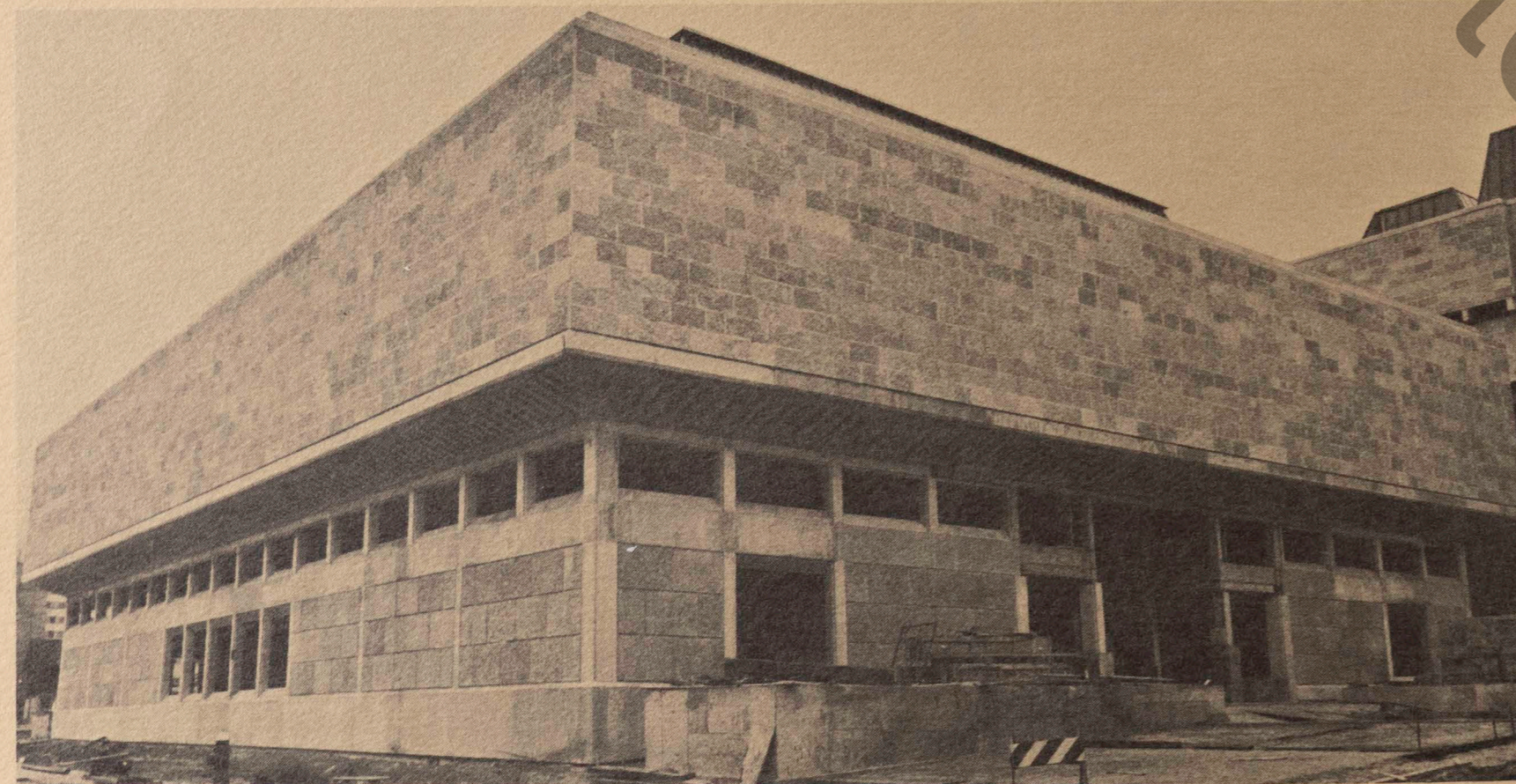
Our efforts in conservation and restoration of works of art have been aided by our recent admission to membership in the Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA). This organization is an alliance of fourteen museums formed to assist conservation programs through laboratory activities, periodic inspection, and research. Recently, ICA staff conservators made their first inspection of the paintings in our collection. Membership in ICA does not preclude our using other restoration facilities, and we have retained several of this country's leading conservators to preserve and restore the works of art in our care.

Gifts and Bequests

Financial bequests and gifts-in-kind for the Elvehjem Art Center can be made at any time through the University of Wisconsin Foundation or to the Board of Regents. Such donations offer several distinct income or estate tax advantages to the donor. It is suggested that the donor consult his or her attorney, trust officer, or insurance representative for advice regarding preference for method of making a bequest. The University of Wisconsin Foundation and Elvehjem Art Center staff are pleased to discuss bequests with prospective donors.



Looking up to the skylight and down through the Brittingham Galleries on the fourth floor, this vista includes the north-south axis of three large galleries and two smaller ones on the east side of the Elvehjem Art Center. When completed, these galleries will offer exhibition space practically unequalled among university art museums.



The exterior of the Elvehjem Art Center, sheathed in lannon stone and copper, now nearing completion, suggests the gallery areas, offices (windows below the overhang), and the Kohler Art Library (ground level). Construction progress on the Elvehjem Art Center indicates that the building will be ready for occupancy in April, 1969. The original target date for completion was September, 1968, but various delays in construction have deferred the date to the spring of 1969.



The benefits of professional restoration are shown dramatically in the illustration of Domenico Gargiulo's **Stoning of St. Stephen** in the collection of the Elvehjem Art Center. Sections of the canvas with areas of test cleanings are shown as light patches. Beneath the darkened varnish and the grime of decades, an important masterpiece by this 17th century Italian artist emerges. When restoration is completed, the painting will be completely cleaned, relined on a new linen canvas, retouched where necessary, and varnished.



Madonna and Child.

Netherlandish (Utrecht). ca. 1475.
Walnut with silver crown. Ht. 31 inches (with crown).
Ex-collection: Dr. Hugo Oelze, Amsterdam.
Max W. Zabel Fund Purchase (68.18.1).

The Gothic period in Europe produced sculpture of varying purposes, intensities, and materials. Especially refined and graceful works emanated from the city of Utrecht, the most important center of Gothic sculpture in the Netherlands, where Dutch artists carved figures illustrating Biblical incidents and the Life of Christ. Church patronage was all-important five hundred years ago, especially in Northern Europe, where Renaissance ideals and secular subjects were not as developed as they were in Italy. Facial features of the Virgin and Child, the treatment of hair in each, and the deeply carved drapery characterize the work of this sensitive but unknown master of Utrecht responsible for this major sculpture recently purchased for the Elvehjem Art Center permanent collection. It is the first example of medieval sculpture to be acquired.

Ancient Greek Vases

The Elvehjem Art Center collection of ancient art has been enriched by the generous gifts of three important vases illustrating the classical tradition of painting. The impressive **hydria**, a water container, was painted by one of the major artists of the black-figure style. This style (also seen on the **amphora**) employed brushed-on decoration in black slip, with incised outlines, against the warm red clay of the body. Shoulder decoration on the **hydria** depicts the Struggle of the Giants, with two four-in-hand spans of horses driven by Athena and a warrior (perhaps Ares). The giant Enkelados runs toward the left. The main panel portrays Athena as a charioteer and Hermes with his winged cap and shoes standing near Herakles, shown with club, quiver, and lion skin.

The **amphora**, a storage vessel for wine or oil, bears decorations on both sides: (1) Herakles strangling the Nemean Lion, with Iolaos holding two clubs and Athena, at right; (2) an armed warrior with a shield standing between two mounted horsemen.

By the end of the 4th century B.C., Greek vase painting had declined from the heights of quality it reached with black and red figure decoration between 600-400 B.C. Greek colonies in the Mediterranean area continued to make painted vases in Attic styles, they imported many Attic vases, and they also produced their own individual styles—as seen in this **krater**, a mixing vessel decorated by an artist living far removed from Greece.



(Left to right)

Hydria. Priam Painter.

Attic. Black-figure.
Late 6th century B.C. Ht. 21½ inches.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Frank (68.14.1).

Neck Amphora. Euphiletos Painter.

Attic. Black-figure.
ca. 530 B.C. Ht. 12½ inches.
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Frank (68.14.2).

Bell Krater.

Apulian. Southern Italy. Red-figure.
ca. 400 B.C. Ht. 10¾ inches.
Gift of L. M. Hanks (68.13.1).

Amphora. (right)

Greek, Boeotian. Late 8th century B.C.
Geometric style. Ht. 35¾ inches.
Max W. Zabel Fund Purchase (68.19.1).

This monumental **amphora**, a vase intended for oil or wine storage, is an important and rare example of the geometric style of decoration that flourished for approximately two centuries. Boeotia, a district in Greece northwest of Athens, developed decorative elements of their own in vase painting, yet their work often reflects Attic influences. The thick, wavy lines on neck and body of this vase are characteristic of Boeotian decoration; but more important is the rather unique use of a warrior standing between two stylized horses, which the Boeotian painter derived from Attic models. This **amphora** serves not only as an impressive example of ancient painting, it is a handsome addition to our growing collection of Greek art in its classical tradition.



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Elvehjem Art Center

TEMPORARY OFFICES

Until the Elvehjem Art Center is completed, offices of the staff will be located in Bascom Hall, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.
Telephone: Area Code 608, 262-3623.

Staff

Millard F. Rogers, Jr., Director
Ruth Jackson, Administrative Secretary
Arthur R. Blumenthal, Curator
Carlyn G. Mayer, Registrar
William C. Bunce, Chief, Kohler Art Library
Law B. Watkins, Project Assistant

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