
Progress Report First Semester 1969-70

Elvehjem Art Center

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin



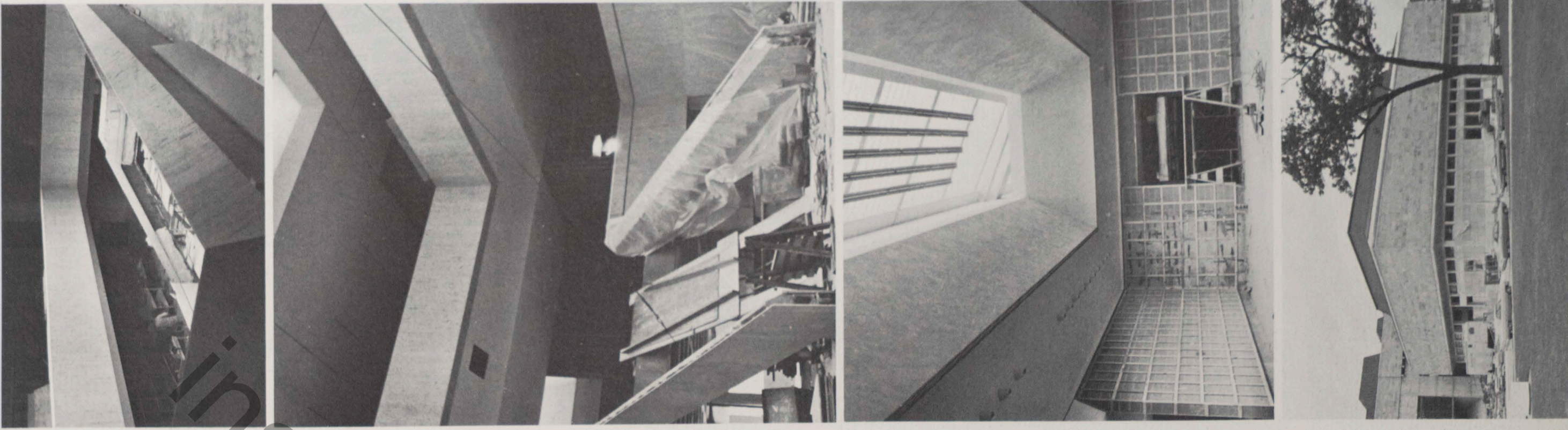
Angles and vistas in the Elvehjem Art Center are enhanced by the use of beautiful materials, such as the Italian travertine covering the Paige Court, balcony areas adjoining the Brittingham Galleries, and in portions of the galleries themselves and in other public areas.

When construction is completed, visitors to the Elvehjem Art Center will approach the fourth floor Brittingham Galleries by this wide stairway. Recessed light fixtures that will illuminate the walls in a continuous band in both the fourth and fifth floors are shown in this illustration. Dark lines in the plastered ceiling of the fifth floor are tracks for "snap-in" spotlights.

This view of one of the Brittingham Galleries illustrates the dramatic design of the ceiling and skylight areas, a portion of the lighting arrangement and the walls before plywood and carpeting have been applied. A system of metal baffles will be installed above the plaster area and below the skylights.

The Elvehjem Art Center, in the cultural center of the campus, will provide outstanding facilities for the exhibition and study of works of art. While much work remains to be finished in the building, the exterior is essentially complete.

Above the central core of the building, decorative patterns occur in the structural elements of the skylight directly above the Paige Court.



New Appointments

The newly appointed Registrar of the Elvehjem Art Center is John S. Hopkins, formerly Assistant Registrar of the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Hopkins has a Master's degree from the University of Kansas, where he held several positions at the museum of art on that campus.

Carlyn Mayer Bassham resigned as Registrar in July, 1969, and has moved to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where her husband has joined the faculty at Wisconsin State University at Oshkosh. As the first Registrar of the Elvehjem Art Center, she was responsible for establishing the excellent record system of the art collection, implementing new procedures that assist the study and enjoyment of the works of art belonging to the University of Wisconsin, and arrangements pertaining to packing, shipping, and insurance.

Henry Behrnd joined the staff as Carpenter on July 1, 1969. His exceptional talents in cabinetmaking and carpentry will be utilized at the Elvehjem Art Center in packing and unpacking operations, installation of art exhibitions, production of pedestals and frames, and other tasks requiring woodworking skills. A fully-equipped shop on the first floor of the Elvehjem Art Center is adjacent to art storage rooms, a receiving room for packing and crating operations, and areas for tool, paint, and lumber storage. Mr. Behrnd has been with the University of Wisconsin for ten years.

Endowment Fund Established

The Elvehjem Art Center was made possible through generous gifts and contributions to the University of Wisconsin Foundation, and it functions as a living memorial. Present needs and future plans of the Elvehjem Art Center offer unique and lasting opportunities for effective use of a contribution in the name of the donor or the names of others to benefit an audience that truly is world-wide and not confined to the university community alone.

An endowment fund for the benefit of the Elvehjem Art Center has been created by the University of Wisconsin Foundation. This fund will insure that the Elvehjem Art Center can better serve the

University of Wisconsin and its public, that its art collection will grow and be enriched, and that its programs will continue to educate.

Federal income and estate tax policies, designed to encourage support of such public institutions as the Elvehjem Art Center, make possible contributions at far less cost than may be thought. The Elvehjem Art Center has need of financial support in several areas, particularly in funds for acquisition of works of art, major art exhibitions, and publications and scholarly catalogues.

Donors will be memorialized through the works of art purchased with their contributions and exhibited in our new museum, providing enjoyment and education for generations of students, faculty, and others visiting and using the excellent facilities of the Art Center.

Recognition of gifts to the endowment fund will be perpetuated by permanent recognition of the donors. Donors' names will be inscribed in bronze in their respective classifications within the Elvehjem Art Center, and those who have contributed in the past will be memorialized as are those who contribute in the future:

Benefactors	\$15,000 and above
Patrons	\$10,000
Sponsors	\$ 1,500

Dedication and Inaugural Activities

The dedication and inauguration of the Elvehjem Art Center, so long delayed because of lagging construction work, is scheduled tentatively for April, 1970. The program and plans for the dedication of the Elvehjem Art Center, one of the finest facilities of its kind in the world, include ceremonies and receptions, tours of the building, and an exhibition of nineteenth and twentieth century art lent by alumni and friends. In addition, the permanent art collection of the Elvehjem Art Center will be installed in the spacious galleries. For most visitors, this will be the first opportunity they have had to see the works of art comprising the art collection of the University of Wisconsin.

Plans are well advanced for the Inaugural Exhibition of the Elvehjem Art Center, but it is possible that our endeavors to contact all alumni and friends who are collectors of art have missed some. At this time we would appreciate hearing from alumni and friends who have not been contacted, even if their collecting interests do not coincide with the theme of this opening exhibition. It is hoped that an exhibition of important works of art produced between the mid-nineteenth century and the present can be organized and drawn from alumni and friends' collections. A catalogue will be published commemorating this exhibition, and the educational benefits of such an exhibition will, we hope, compensate for the inconvenience of bare walls and empty pedestals in the homes of the lenders who have supported this show so generously.

Curatorial Research

One major duty of the Curator, besides planning exhibitions, recommending works for conservation and investigating possible acquisitions, includes research. Research, indeed, involves every curatorial task. Thus far, it has centered on the permanent collection, works considered for purchase, and the Inaugural Exhibition plans and catalogue.

Research tries to answer questions about an object: Who did it? When did he do it? What materials did he use? What does it show or mean? Which works relate to it? Who owned it? Has any exhibition or publication included it? What do connoisseurs think of it?

When the Curator began to study the collection of over 1200 objects, considerable research remained to be done. We need research to understand and appreciate an object better. For example, when the Samuel H. Kress Foundation gave us *A Youth Playing the Viola* in 1961, the painting was attributed to Angelo Caroselli (1585-1652), a noted follower of Caravaggio. In 1965 an Italian scholar published it as a work by Pietro Paolini, a student of Caroselli's. Who really painted the work? Research into historical surveys, magazine articles, museum and exhibition catalogues, and other experts' opinions indicated Caroselli did. As with most connoisseurship, we deduced this largely on stylistic

grounds. In addition to our permanent collection, the acquisition of a new object depends upon research to establish its authenticity, quality, history, and significance.

Status of Conservation and Restoration

Several conservation and restoration procedures, so necessary to the good health of the works of art in our care, have been instituted. Others will be operative after the opening of the Elvehjem Art Center. In the meantime, the services of professional conservators have been enlisted to restore thirty-two paintings and forty prints in the permanent collection. Since July, 1967, work of this magnitude was made possible through generous financial support from the President's Unassigned Fund, the Anonymous Funds and the Humanistic Foundation (H. L. Smith Bequest). As reported in an earlier **Progress Report**, the Elvehjem Art Center is a member of the Intermuseum Conservation Association.

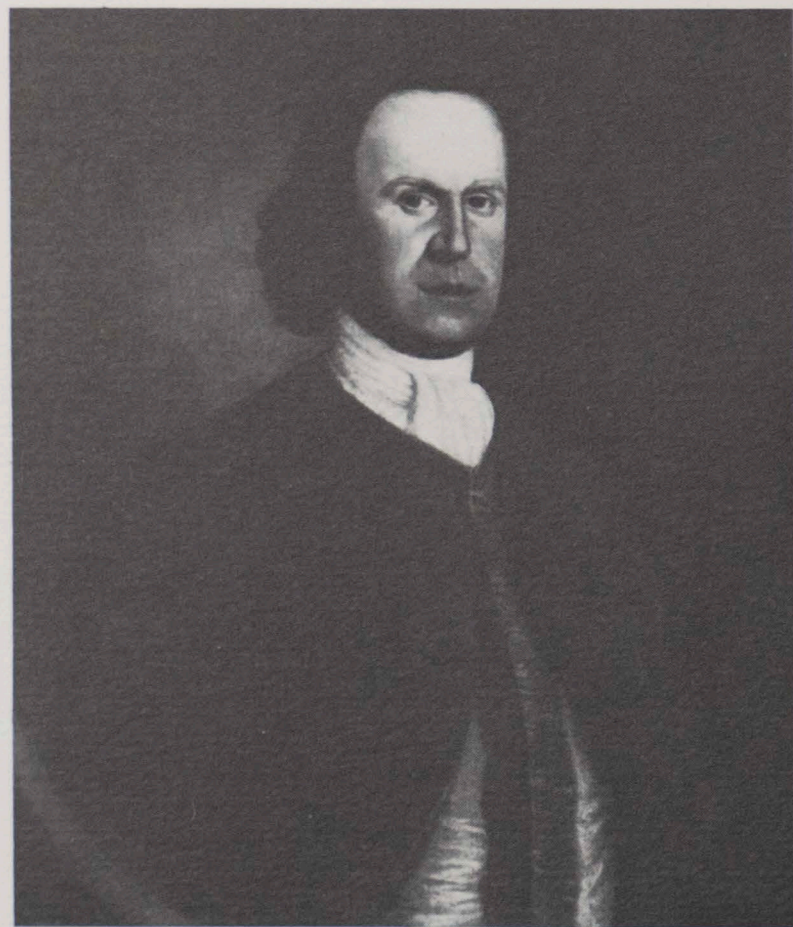
Gifts and Bequests

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.

Recent donors to the Elvehjem Art Center include: Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Gosman, Mrs. J. D. Patton, Mrs. Stanley Stone, Hazel Maryan Memorial Fund, Quirk Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Frank, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Edna G. Dyar, and Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Jensen.

New Acquisitions Spanning Three Centuries

In several areas, the permanent collection of the Elvehjem Art Center has made notable acquisitions. Where gaps once existed, works of high quality now illustrate man's finest artistic achievements. These objects support the educational mission of the University. Recent acquisitions featured in past **Progress Reports** were chosen for their exceptional merits and because they illustrated some missing links in our attempts to present a complete and lasting record. Continuing this theme, this issue presents four newly acquired works of art, three paintings and a sculpture, spanning three centuries of American art.



Thomas McIlworth (active 1757-ca. 1770).

Gentleman in a Brown Coat.

Oil on canvas. 29 1/2 x 24 inches.
Max W. Zabel Fund Purchase (68.17.1).

Artists in colonial America often were itinerant painters. McIlworth was one of those who is known to have worked in New York City, the Schenectady area, and Montreal during his few years of activity. Only about twenty portraits by McIlworth, all

straightforward and powerful likenesses, exist today including this unknown and stern-faced sitter who was recorded as he wished to be remembered. McIlworth's directness and simplicity in rendering typify colonial portraiture in America in the mid-eighteenth century.

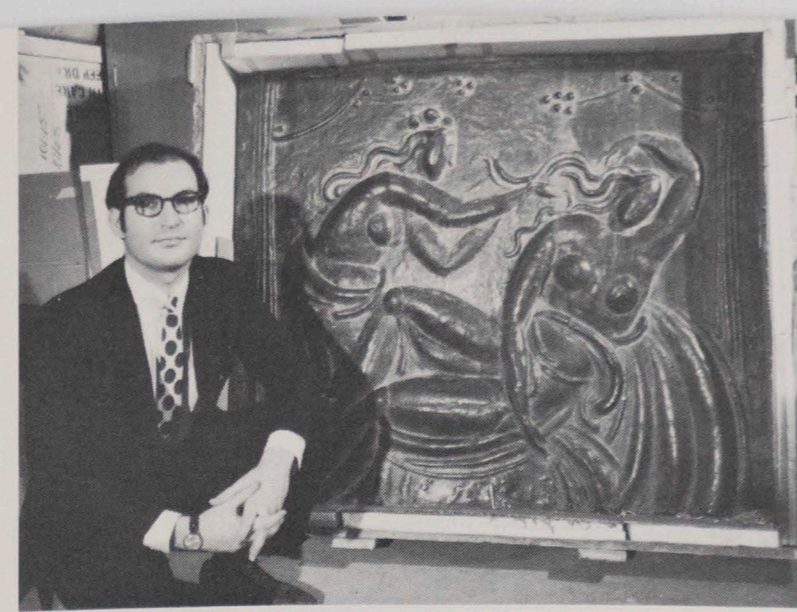


Severin Roesen (active 1848-ca. 1871).

Still Life with Watermelon.

Oil on canvas. 29 x 36 1/8 inches.
Signed, lower right: Roesen.
Max W. Zabel Fund Purchase (68.22.1).

Roesen was born in Cologne, Germany, where he was first known as a decorator of porcelain. By 1850 he was active in New York City, and from 1858 to 1871 his career centered in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Roesen's paintings of fruit or flowers, a succulent sort of still life that was his speciality, repeated certain elements: the slice of watermelon, bunches of plump grapes, a glass of effervescent wine, decaying grape leaves, and a basket of spilled raspberries. Apparently, the marble top table was a studio prop he used often, and the "store window" arrangements that characterize his compositions suggest nature's bounty. This 19th century aspect of American painting was paralleled by the interest lavished on the native landscape by Hudson River School artists. The painting is the first significant American still life to enter the collection of the Elvehjem Art Center.



Elie Nadelman (1882/85-1946).

Two Nudes.

Bronze. 47 x 57 1/2 inches.
Signed, lower center: NADELMAN
Dr. C. V. Kierzkowski Fund Purchase (68.21.1).

Born in Warsaw, Nadelman distinguished himself in Paris in the first decade of the 20th century as an imaginative, forceful sculptor. As a precursor of Analytical Cubism, his sculpture influenced Picasso, and by 1909 an important one-man show was held in Paris. Helena Rubenstein began collecting Nadelman's work at this time, and in 1914 she brought him to America where he worked for the rest of his life. His interest in ancient sculpture, its classical and idealized character, affected his art. He extracted the essence of natural shapes and recreated them in sophisticated, languorous, sometimes humorous forms. While Nadelman's range of expression is broad, his sculpture is clearly marked with his personal esthetic. Nadelman executed the plaster from which this bronze relief was cast about 1911-1912. The plaster was part of Helena Rubenstein's vast collection of Nadelman's sculpture until 1966, when her collection was sold at auction and this bronze was made. It is likely that the plaster was part of a scheme of decorative reliefs designed for Miss Rubenstein's house in London. The relief has sometimes been titled **Spring**, relating it to subjects involving the **Seasons**, dating from 1911-12. The important bronze relief, shown with Arthur Blumenthal, Curator, is packed and crated awaiting installation in the new Elvehjem Art Center.

Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828).

Mrs. Aaron Davis.

Oil on panel. 28 1/4 x 22 1/4 inches.
Ex-collections: Williams, Kellogg, and Worthington Families of Massachusetts
Max W. Zabel Fund Purchase (68.8.2).

America's greatest artist of the Federal Period was Gilbert Stuart, whose sitters included the major national figures of the time, such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, as well as the merchants and matrons of Boston, New York, and

Philadelphia. Born in Rhode Island, Stuart studied with Benjamin West and had a successful career in London before settling in America by 1792. His quick manipulation of paint meant fewer sittings, and it is said he could complete a portrait in three sittings of one or two hours each. In 1805, Stuart settled in Boston, where he worked for the last twenty-three years of his career.

Mrs. Aaron Davis (née Theoda Williams) of Roxbury, Massachusetts, sat for Stuart in 1816, when her husband's portrait (now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) was executed, also. Her self-confident expression, the richness of briskly applied paint, the half-length pose all characterize Stuart's portraiture at this period. Until acquired by the Elvehjem Art Center, the portrait remained with descendants of Mrs. Davis throughout its history. The frame probably is the original one made for the painting by John Doggett, a famous cabinetmaker of Boston and Dedham, who made clock cases for the Willard family.



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
Arthur R. Blumenthal, Curator
William C. Bunce, Chief, Kohler Art Library
John S. Hopkins, Registrar
Ruth Jackson, Administrative Secretary
Henry Behrnd, Carpenter
Law B. Watkins, Project Assistant