THE LEHMAN COLLECTION

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An event of unusual importance in connection with the reopening of the paintings galleries is the simultaneous exhibition in four adjacent galleries of paintings and other works of art from the collection of Robert Lehman, Vice-President and Trustee of the Museum. The Lehman collection will remain on view throughout the coming summer.

The extraordinary range of materials in the collection, which is so extensive that space permits exhibition of only a representative selection, is a fair measure of the catholic interests of the father and son who were responsible for the loving accumulation of these treasures. The late Philip Lehman collected over a period of a quarter of a century, most actively from 1911 to his death in 1926. Robert Lehman continues to be a very active and perceptive collector. He was entrusted at an early age with the responsibility for preserving, cataloguing—for he is an accomplished art historian—and enlarging the great corpus of objects his father was accumulating, a charge he has carried out with love and enthusiasm. The actual choice of the works of art, in so far as it can be identified with father or with son, reflects to some degree the specific tastes of their periods, but in both cases is in the best sense the expression of men with keen sensibility and strong individuality.

That part of the collection assembled by the elder Mr. Lehman is most notable for its carefully chosen and very extensive group of early Italian paintings, its superb group of Gothic tapestries, its unrivaled Romanesque and Gothic enamels, its splendid range of renaissance maiolica, and its renaissance bronzes, jewelry, and furniture, as well as for half a dozen great paintings of the Flemish and Spanish schools. The son's most important additions lie in the fields of medieval illumination, old-master drawings, and modern French painting, together with such single items of major distinction as the Rembrandt portrait of Gerard de Lairesse. Many of the objects are now being seen for the first time by the public, but many others are already familiar through Robert Lehman's great generosity in lending to this and other museums for special exhibitions.

The Italian pictures provide an admirable survey of the main lines of development of Sienese and early Florentine painting, together with a fascinating side glance at the parallel achievements of the Venetian and Ferrarese schools. Among the earliest paintings pride of place belongs to the School of Duccio diptych, the Madonna and Child Enthroned and the Crucifixion, which was formerly in the cathedral of Lemberg. Of nearly the same period is the predella panel depicting the Last Supper which formed part of Ugolino da Siena's great altarpiece of 1294 for the church of Santa Croce in Florence. This is the only part of the dismembered altarpiece in America, the other parts being divided principally between London and Berlin. Christ and the sleeping Saint John appear at the head of the table at the extreme left of the panel instead of in the more familiar position at the center, the distinguished profile of Judas is conspicuous by its lack of a halo, and Ugolino has considerably turned the plates on their rims so that we may see what the Apostles were eating. A striking piece from the end of the thirteenth century is the small pointed retable in five compartments by an unknown painter of the Marches, dated about 1300. Although missing its wings, this little altarpiece is still a work of noble resonance with its rich color harmonies of red, black, and white on gold, while the detail of Saint Thomas Aquinas preaching offers special subject interest.

A less sophisticated thirteenth-century painting is the panel representing Saint Bartholomew and Saint Simon by the Umbrian Master of Saint Francis, who had considerable difficulty with perspective and whose work looks back to Carolingian manuscript tradition and Byzantine
wall decoration for precept and inspiration. A totally different impression of what was being developed out of the Byzantine tradition is provided by the monumental Madonna and Child by an unidentified Umbrian painter working about 1330.

It is a considerable leap to the powerful and dramatic Crucifixion by Orcagna and his assistants or the sharply characterized Saint Philip of Simone Martini. Four companion panels of Apostles came to the Museum with the Maitland F. Griggs Bequest in 1943 and are on view in a near-by gallery. A contemporary panel in odd contrast is that representing Saint Ansanus by Lippo Vanni. This modest figure, although manly enough, was mistaken for Joan of Arc because of the hair-do and banner, and the picture was sold as such within living memory by a Parisian bookseller.

Of this same period the Coronation of the Virgin, formerly attributed to Fra Angelico and now considered the finest surviving work of Niccolò di Buonaccorso, deserves special attention. Perhaps its most curious feature is the arched row of seraphim peering out between their wings, which apparently sprout from the clavicles rather than from the more customary spot on the shoulder blades. The matter-of-fact detail in Giovanni Baronzio da Rimini's Feast of Herod may well hold our attention, whether for the early fourteenth-century architecture and costume, the table utensils, the aplomb with which the spectators view the ghastly charade, or the nice social distinction by which the servants, though occupying the foremost plane of the picture, are painted much smaller than Herod and his guests.

The fifteenth century is equally richly represented, and all the principal tendencies of that violently experimental age, at once inquiring and mystical, are to be seen here. We may choose where we will: all of these pictures seem far less remote than those of the preceding century, far closer in spirit to the preoccupations of our own time. Perhaps the modern sensibility will be most strongly attracted by the stark economy of Sassetta's Saint Anthony in the Wilderness. The good saint's inexplicable attitude of mild astonishment is due to the fact that he is encountering a demon, but this unseemly apparition was erased at an early date when it was thought that a mere picture of a devil was sufficient to bring misfortune to the owner.

The enchanting Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise by Giovanni di Paolo is likewise full of delight for modern eyes, with its Blake-like organization, its learned reference to Dante, and the delectable bit of Paradise which at once foretells the enameled meadows of Botticelli and sums up the nature-loving detail of Gothic illuminators and tapestry weavers. This panel offers a strange contrast to the formal elegance and subtlety of the same artist's later picture of Zacharias and the Angel, an episode taking place in a wondrous, many-domed church of exquisite lightness and complexity. A third Giovanni di Paolo, the Coronation of the Virgin, is again of quite different character, because of its large scale. The subject is treated with tenderness as well as reverence, and no one could fail to be touched by the angel musicians, one with a portable organ, the other with a harp. The tiny Sassetti diptych with Saint George and Saint Nicholas will catch the sharp eye despite its diminutive size, and the extreme worldliness of this Saint George, a magnificently elegant fop, is in vivid contrast to the mystic simplicity of the Saint Anthony of a few years earlier. For the exhibition the diptych has been separated and the precious panels are shown in a case with renaissance jewelry.

The portrait of a woman by Paolo Uccello likewise arrests attention, for though it has suffered by time the presence of the lady is very real and she stands against a background as rich and indescribable in color as a piece of Persian faience. The distinguished, intelligent sitter is thought to be Battista Sforza, Duchess of Urbino, in whose court Uccello was working in 1468, and the portrait is now so labeled. Hardly less striking are the wedding portraits by Francesco Cossa of Alessandro Gozzadini and his bride, Donna Canonici of Ferrara, dated 1477, the year of the artist's death. This serious young couple, whose

The paintings and drawings on the following pages are in the collection lent by Robert Lehman for the reopening of the picture galleries.
The Crucifixion. School of Duccio (about 1255-1319)
profiles are set against the corners of renaissance buildings in deep landscapes of almost Flemish complexity, had the artist paint across the tops of their portraits a Latin inscription: "In order that our image may survive." This is a long step from those earlier pictures in the collection in which portraiture is restricted to representations of donors who, in reduced scale, play a very inconspicuous role in religious scenes.

The series of Tuscan pictures reaches its climax with the superb, if miniature, Annunciation by Botticelli, an exquisite and truly monumental work.

Three other pictures from north of the Apennines, apart from the Cossa portraits, deserve special attention. One of the earliest Bellinis, still showing the influence of Mantegna but already announcing the distinct personality of a new and great master, is the Madonna and Child, very different in conception from the formal treatment of this subject at about the same time by the Umbrian Niccolò da Foligno but suffused with a similar tenderness. The sumptuous, cool Madonna Enthroned by Crivelli is a few years later than the Bellini but speaks with an earlier accent. It is remote in spirit from the vivid polyptych by Bartolommeo Vivarini, in which the central subject is a Madonna and Child with a donatrix in the habit of a nun. This scene is surrounded by smaller representations of the Annunciation (divided between two panels), the Nativity, and the Pietà. All are notable for their brilliance of coloring, richness of textural and botanical detail, and a certain dramatic harshness of drawing.

The Flemish pictures form another notable group, although fewer in number, and the earliest among them is of quite extraordinary interest. This is the masterpiece of Petrus Christus, known as The Legend of Saint Eligius and Saint Godebertha. It affords among American collections the only parallel to the celebrated Van Eyck double portrait of the Arnolfinis in the National Gallery, London. Painted only fifteen years later, in 1449, it is considered one of the first and most important paintings to depict an episode from the daily life of the times, for the religious subject is only a pretext; this it does with astounding fidelity not only to the personages and their costumes but to the fascinating array of objects in the court goldsmith's shop and to the passers-by in the street outside, which we see reflected in a convex mirror. Saint Godebertha—so goes a probably garbled later version of a seventh-century event—came with her fiancé to the shop of Eligius, goldsmith and master of the mint to her father, King Dagobert, to be fitted for a wedding ring. Instead, Eligius slipped on her finger a holy ring which made her a mystic bride of Christ, so that she renounced her earthly engagement and devoted herself to a life that won her eventual canonization. The artist, who has depicted this as though it were a contemporary event, has achieved a wonderfully revealing exposition of this tensely dramatic episode and has simultaneously left us an almost hallucinatingly real record of an actual shop full of recondite objects devoted to the conquests of health, love, and the higher finance.

Neither the personages nor the objects would be at home in either of the remarkable paintings by Memling in the collection. The more spectacular of these is the Annunciation, here treated with such detached gravity that only the angel adjusting the Virgin's train betrays any emotion over the gratifying solemnity of the sacred news. The Portrait of a Man, the largest and finest of Memling's essays in this genre, is again of such detached and saintly character that the picture was indeed at one time converted into a Saint Sebastian by the addition of a halo and an arrow, since removed. The four panels by Gerard David, formerly the wings of an altarpiece but now framed in the form of a double diptych, are likewise characterized by a silent gravity, full of wonder, in which all the action seems to be seen though a thick crystal of preternatural clarity. The original panels have, like fortunate Siamese twins, been split so that both sides can now be viewed: those which once were the main faces of the altar wings represent Christ Bearing the Cross and the Resurrection, while what was formerly the reverse depicts the Annunciation.

Two other Flemish pictures may detain us for a moment, both by anonymous artists. The panel of the Virgin and Child with Saint Anne and a Donatrix by the Master of the Saint
Saint Anthony in the Wilderness, by Sassetta (1392?-1450)
Ursula Legend, so curious in its disproportion between the figures of the actors, contains a finely detailed view of Bruges and an interesting inscription concerning the donatrix, Anne de Blasère, who died in 1480. The little Virgin and Child of about 1490 by the Master of Saint Aegidius is suave, brilliant in color, and lively in the figures. One feels that Dürer is not far away.

Only two German pictures from the collection have been chosen for exhibition: a more than usually charming Cranach, the Nymph of the Sacred Fountain, and the well-known late portrait of Erasmus by Holbein, which was commissioned by John Norris for his fellow gentleman-usher at the court of Henry VIII, Edward Banister.

Three French paintings contemporary with the Flemish group maintain the high quality of this section, the Simon Marmion Lamentation over Christ; a touching portrait long said to be of the young Suzanne de Bourbon by the Master of Moulins, in which the sad, determined little Burgundian princess is shown against a landscape background containing a moated château and a row of family tombs; and a revealing anonymous portrait of a more mature woman in the tall, conical hennin with floating veil so typical of the period. It is now thought that the sitter in the newly cleaned portrait by the Master of Moulins is more probably Margaret of Austria in view of its date, about 1490, than the tragic granddaughter of Louis XI, only an infant at that time. Margaret, born in 1480, was the daughter of the Emperor Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy; after being early widowed she became Regent of the Low Countries.

The High Renaissance is not represented in that part of the Lehman collection devoted to painting, but with the seventeenth century we come to a spectacular group of Dutch pictures. Pride of place here, or indeed in any comparable collection, goes to the extraordinary late portrait by Rembrandt of a rising young painter, Gerard de Lairesse. This heartbreaking presentation of a young man at once self-satisfied and full of unspoken doubts was painted in 1665. Vain, gifted, spoiled, doomed to blindness in consequence of his dissolute life—all these things Rembrandt tells us and yet demands that we protect and cherish the bearer of talent. It is a haunting portrait, with the great, sad eyes of a nocturnal animal. A gulf separates it for penetration and compassion from the handsome but relatively external portrait of a vigorous and commanding elderly man, painted by Rembrandt nearly a generation earlier, in 1638.

The pair of portraits of Burgomaster van Duren of Deventer and his wife by Terborch are again very choice if rather solemn specimens (yet faintly mocking, too); these were painted the year after Terborch’s return from Spain and suggest both that he was influenced by Velazquez and that a good Dutchman could not resist producing a discreet parody of the similar portrait of Philip IV. The visitor’s heart is more apt to be taken by the darker of the two genre scenes by Pieter de Hooch. This Interior with Figures, in which a contented family relaxes about a table against a wall sumptuously hung with gilded Spanish leather, is as exquisite as a Vermeer and rather warmer in its feeling. It is one of the great masterpieces of this school.

The Spanish school is represented by three extraordinary pictures. The earliest is a half-length figure of Saint Jerome as Cardinal by El Greco, a subject which he repeated five times (one version is in the Frick Collection), but this is the latest and richest, in which the painterly craft of the artist is seen at its most flickeringly electric pitch of achievement. The small Velazquez portrait of the Infanta Maria Theresa, painted when she was eleven and probably in the same year as the celebrated portrait of Pope Innocent X, shows the little princess in the bizarre make-up and dress in fashion at the remote Spanish court. We can understand the feelings of her future husband, Louis XIV, who, when he obtained a secret glimpse of her just before the marriage, was appalled by her costume but allowed that her looks were sufficient to make it “easy to fall in love with her.” The third Spanish picture, most recent among the old masters in this collection and one of its greatest glories, is the already neoclassic Goya portrait of the Countess of Altamira and Her Daughter, painted about 1788. This captivating aubade, all muted and silvered harmonies of palest roses, blues, golds, and whites, in which
The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, by Giovanni di Paolo (about 1402-1482)

The Annunciation, by Alessandro Botticelli (about 1444-1510)
the only sharp accents are provided by the Countess's dark hair and the two pairs of dark eyes, is a tour de force of brushwork. The rendering of the full gown of flower-sprigged pink silk and lace shimmers silently but liquidly like the dawn-struck waters of a Spanish lagoon.

Of the well-known medieval tapestries in the collection there are three of outstanding quality that have been chosen for exhibition: the Last Supper, Saint Veronica, and a Falcon Hunt. The latter gives us a delightful insight into the earthy yet elegant side of the Gothic temperament, for this was the age of chivalry as well as a time of deep spiritual preoccupation.

Among the aquamaniles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries perhaps the most entertaining is the Flemish piece of about 1400 representing Aristotle and Phyllis. There was a time when any educated person could be expected to recognize the actors and to penetrate the meaning of this playful conceit as an allegory of the triumph of love over wisdom. The story refers to a perhaps apocryphal escapade of the great philosopher who managed for once to elude his wife but lost his dignity in doing so. He seems to have considered the results to be worth it, and the thought that so noble a mind could nonetheless stoop to folly was a great comfort to medieval intellectuals. Others in the group which will command special attention are the horseman with a falcon and the Samson and the lion, both German pieces of the fourteenth century.

About twenty examples have been chosen from the extensive collection of medieval and early renaissance illuminations, many of which will be unfamiliar to the public. The magnificence, brilliance of color, and often fascinating detail of these mostly anonymous miniatures will repay the closest study as well as give delightful surprise and pleasure. The most celebrated among them is the only sheet in America from the great Book of Hours of Étienne Chevalier, who was counselor to Charles VII and Louis XI in the middle of the fifteenth century, illuminated by Jean Fouquet. Although the subject of this page is the Vespers of the Holy Ghost, in which a swarm of demons is miraculously dispersed, the principal interest for modern eyes lies in a detailed view of the heart of Paris, out of which looms the familiar west front of Nôtre-Dame. The selection of illuminations ranges from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries and gives a good idea of the differences between the various schools, particularly the Flemish, French, and Italian.

A similar selection has been made from the important collection of drawings, which range easily and brilliantly across a wide span of centuries. Again, several of these are familiar through frequent loan to major exhibitions; others will come as surprises to perhaps even the informed visitor. The Rembrandts are famous here, but the three important Dürer drawings recently acquired from the Lubomirsky collection are being seen for the first time in America. The Van der Goes Virgin and Child, the Flagellation by the early German Master of the Playing Cards, and the Goya Self-Portrait have been widely published, but the Virgin of Master Wilhelm, the anonymous Flemish illustration of the proverb of men shoveling chairs, the superb Portrait of a Lady by a follower of Pontormo, and the Guardi View of Venice from San Giorgio are relatively little known. The Leonardo bear and the Pisanello gazelle are a delightful pair sure of wide popularity, and other drawings which will command special attention include the Pollaiuolo equestrian group, the Fra Bartolommeo Madonna, the Van der Weyden study for John the Baptist, the Claude View of the Villa Doria-Pamphili, and the Goya Portrait of the Artist's Son.

In the field of modern French painting Mr. Lehman has again shown his freedom from fashion and has among other things assembled striking groups of Fauve and Pointillist paintings and water colors. Along with the names which have entered the popular language are excellent examples by less familiar masters such as Signac and Cross. Of the indisputably great post-Impressionist masters represented in the modern French section, three paintings seem particularly destined for acclaim: the Cézanne House in the Trees, the Degas Modiste, and Renoir's Two Girls at the Piano. Bonnard's Tea Time is honorable company for this trio.
Alessandro di Bernardo Gozzadini and his wife, Donna Canonici, by Francesco Cossa (1436-1477). Dated 1477
Suzanne de Bourbon(?), by the Master of Moulins (active last quarter of the XV century). Portrait of a Man, by Hans Memling (died 1494)
The Legend of Saint Eligius and Saint Godeberta, by Petrus Christus (died 1472 or 1473)
Interior with Figures, by Pieter de Hooch (c.1659–after 1684)
Gerard de Lairesse, by Rembrandt (1606-1669). Dated 1665
The Countess of Altamira and Her Daughter Maria, by Francisco de Goya (1746-1828)
At the Modiste, by Edgar Hilaire Germain Degas (1834-1917)

House in the Trees, by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906)