

# Museums and the fine arts in the United States

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Dazu kommen noch 13 Gäste, von welchen wir hoffen, dass wir sie bei der nächsten Tagung als reguläre Mitglieder begrüßen dürfen.

## II. Museums and the fine Arts in the United States

By *Ralph H. Wark Hendersonville, North Carolina*

(Fig. 21—27)

The last 20 years have brought about a great change in the cultural development of the Fine Arts in the United States. Whereas the great Art Centers of the Country were

concentrated mainly in the East, or such large cities as Chicago, Cleveland or Detroit and the West-Coast, we find today that more and more cities in the Middle-West and the South are building up Art Centers of their own, establishing local Museums with collections of Old-Master and Modern Paintings, Ceramics, Textiles and nearly all other fields of the Fine Arts. An art student today need not depend any more on the old, large Museums of the East, such as in New York or Boston, but can find locally all the material needed to assist him in his field of study.

A pioneering step forward towards creating an Art Center was made by the State of North Carolina. The International Lawyer Richard Humber was influential in having the North Carolina State Legislature passing a Bill appropriating 1 Million Dollars towards creating the North Carolina Museum of Art at Raleigh, thus organizing the first such Institution backed by the money of the tax payers of a State. Mr. Humber was also influential in getting the Samuel H. Kress Foundation to loan to the new Museum another 1 Million Dollars worth of paintings from its collection. With assistance of the Art collector Mr. Carl Hamilton the new Museum with the appropriated funds was able over the past years to purchase some 139 works of Art of outstanding quality. As its Director the Museum was fortunate in securing the eminent art authority Dr. W. Valentin and his able assistant, Mr. James B. Byrnes. During the past years quite a number of North Carolina citizens have made most important gifts to the Museum, so that the collections today are of major importance.

Instrumental in the creation of new Art Centers have been local Art Collectors Clubs. Within the past decades more and more collectors of antiques, particularly old porcelains, have come along, and these Clubs have aided their local Museums by arranging loan exhibitions, and also by presenting their Museums with specimens, thus starting the foundation of Museum collections.

There have been *porcelain collectors Clubs* in the East. In Boston this group comprises more than 200 members. Within the past 10 or 15 years similar collectors Clubs have been formed in Southern and Middle Western cities and on the Pacific coast. In Seattle, Wash. the Porcelain Club, in its 15th year, has grown so that today they have two groups of 25 members each. This very active Club has arranged important loan exhibits at the Seattle Art Museum, supplying the porcelains from collections of their members. The Club has paid for the publishing of special illustrated catalogues of these exhibitions and of late have interested the Museum to the extent that the Museum is now purchasing 18th century European porcelains themselves.

Another very progressive Porcelain Study Club was founded about 10 years ago in Memphis, Tenn. This Club, «The Antiquarians» were able to interest the Memphis

Brooks Memorial Art Gallery to include in its extension program the building of a fine Porcelain Exhibit Room and have arranged loan exhibitions from the collections of Club members and were also responsible in securing out-of-town collections to be shown in that Gallery. The famous Wedgewood Collection, which traveled over the country, was also shown in Memphis owing to the splendid display facilities.

In January of this year a specially interesting exhibition was arranged at the Memphis Brooks Gallery, commemorating the 250th anniversary of the invention of Boettger of his stone-ware and subsequently the first European porcelain. A member of the Memphis Antiquarians loaned her collection of early Meissen porcelains for the occasion, and for the first time in this country a truly representative showing of all the products of the Meissen factory was on display. The illustrations fig. 21—27 show some of the cabinets of this exhibition. At the opening a special lecture on Meissen porcelain was given to the Antiquarians by an authority on the subject, and the porcelains shown formed an excellent background to illustrate the development of this first European porcelain factory. As will be seen from the illustrations some very rare specimens are included in this finest Meissen collection in the south. A group of religious figures and busts, as well as some of the busts of the Austrian Emperors were shown, items hardly found anywhere in private collections today. Most important specimens of the famous Meissen painter, Adam Friedrich von Loewenfinck, were on hand, including the key piece with his monogram signature. This piece, a Höchst Fayence Vase with a Ruin Landscape cleared the problem of long standing controversy about this artist, who now has come into his own and is recognized as one of the foremost German ceramic painters of the 18th century.

The Memphis Brooks Memorial Art Gallery has also created through the efforts of the local Glass Collectors Club a special Glass Exhibition Room. Some of the newer, smaller Museums have in recent years greatly benefited by long term loans of paintings belonging to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Up to now no less than 19 cities have been given collections from this Foundation. During 1958 four cities received such loans, Cleveland, Atlanta, Raleigh and Memphis. The Memphis Brooks Memorial Art Gallery was given 28 works of Art, worth over 1 Million Dollars this spring. It was specially selected by the late Samuel Kress, since it was in Memphis that he opened his first 5 & 10 cent store. This trend of distributing art treasures all over the United States has greatly helped to stimulate Art appreciation. These smaller Museums provide information and interesting lecture programs to which attendance is rapidly growing. Most gratifying is the interest that has arisen in 18th century ceramics all over the country.

Whereas 20 years ago very little porcelain of the 18th century could be seen, even in the large Eastern Museums, such gifts to the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art as the McClellan and the Thornton-Wilson collections of porcelains have aroused the collector instinct in many an Art enthusiast. An ever growing number of porcelain collectors are to be found everywhere. The publishing of the fine catalogues of the porcelain collection of Judge Irvin Untermyer by the Metropolitan Museum has contributed a great deal in stimulating this interest. A sign of the ever increasing number of U. S. porcelain collectors in the fact that no less than 35 of them are members of the Swiss Porcelain collectors Club: «Schweizer Freunde der Keramik» the most important porcelain collectors Club in the world.

### III. Literaturerscheinungen

#### A. In Buchform:

*C. L. David's Samling*, Kopenhagen 1958. 3. Teil, 227 Seiten mit vielen Abbildungen. Herausgegeben vom Kunstindustriemuseum in Kopenhagen.

Der 1. Band erschien 1948 zum 70. Geburtstag Davids und zugleich zur Feier der Gründung dieses neuen Museums an der Kronprinsessegade 30, das dem Museum für dekorative Kunst unterstellt wurde. Er behandelte vor allem islamisch Keramik (dazu Silber und Gemälde). Der 2. Band von 1953 beschreibt fast ausschliesslich Fayencen und Porzellane von Frankreich, Meissen und Kopenhagen (weit über 100 vorzügliche Abbildungen). Der 3. Band, der jetzt erschien, bringt eine Abhandlung über dänische Fayencen von Store Kongensgade in Kopenhagen (Dir. Johann Wolff, Ernst Pfau, Gierlof u. a.). Da der Text dänisch geschrieben ist, ist er für uns unlesbar; er entspricht aber im grossen und ganzen den Ausführungen Emil Hannovers, Bd. I, S. 412 (Übersetzung von B. Rackham 1925). Ein weiteres Kapitel behandelt die türkische Keramik der Frühzeit. Wieder sind auch hier die Abbildungen erstklassig. Einen Mangel hat dieser Band; es fehlt eine kurze englische oder anderssprachige Zusammenfassung, wie sie der 1. Band hatte. Das Buch wurde uns im Austausch gegen unser Mitteilungsblatt überreicht und steht den Mitgliedern zum Studium zur Verfügung. SD.

#### B. In Zeitschriften:

*Keramos*, Zeitschrift der Keramikfreunde, Düsseldorf. Heft 2, Oktober 1958.

Fortsetzung und Schluss der Arbeit des verstorbenen Dr. Noothoven van Goor über die Arnheimer Fayencefabrik. Kurt Pilz: Der Nürnberger Fayence-Hausmaler Abraham Helmhack. Sehr gute und interessante Arbeit