

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
CHESTER DALE COLLECTION
GALLERY 88

This gallery presents works of French painters in the latter half of the nineteenth century. These artists were variously called Romanticists, Doctrinaire Realists, Realists, Impressionists, and Post-Impressionists.

THE PICTURES ARE DISCUSSED IN SEQUENCE, BEGINNING AT THE RIGHT OF THE DOORWAY AS ONE ENTERS FROM THE EAST HALL.

HONORÉ DAUMIER (1808 - 1879)

HIPPOLYTE LAVOIGNAT (painted about 1860)

This is a rare portrait in oils by the leading caricaturist of nineteenth-century France. The subject was a fellow artist famous for his wood engravings. Daumier, merciless and sarcastic when depicting the corruption and pretensions of French society, has portrayed his friend with affectionate understanding.

HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836 - 1904)

PORTRAIT OF SONIA (dated 1890)

The inscription reads, "To my dear niece Sonia, Fantin-90". The artist, a dedicated realist, has presented the physical likeness of his niece so precisely that the psychological elements in her personality speak for themselves.

EUGÈNE DELACROIX (1798 - 1863)

ALGERIAN CHILD (painted about 1832)

This was painted at a time when French artists were beginning to find themes for painting among the peoples of their colonial possessions in North Africa and the East. Delacroix, the leader of the Romantic School, has revealed in the child's flashing eyes and dark skin an exotic form of beauty and interpreted it with his characteristic rich coloring and fluid brushwork.

EDGAR DEGAS (1834 - 1917)

MADAME RENÉ DE GAS (painted 1872 - 1873)

This subtly beautiful portrait was painted in America while the artist was visiting his brother, a cotton broker in New Orleans. Madame de Gas, his sister-in-law, was on the verge of total blindness, an affliction from which the artist himself suffered in later years. Note how the color harmonies of grays and greens suggest the limited world of her failing sight, and her unfocused stare the nature of her tragedy. (2)

PIERRE PUVIS DE CHAVANNES (1824 - 1898)

THE PRODIGAL SON (painted about 1879)

The theme illustrates with gentle melancholy the Biblical story of the rich man's son who, having squandered his wealth was reduced to tending swine in the open fields. Puvis derived his style of flat tonal areas and subdued neutral colors partly from his study of the fresco painters of the early Italian Renaissance.

CAMILLE PISSARRO (1830 - 1903)

BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS, MORNING, SUNLIGHT (dated 1897)

Pissarro, one of the founders of Impressionism, developed a palette composed of pure unblended colors. At a distance these colors seem to fuse, creating an illusion of atmospheric light. In spite of these prismatic hues, the general effect in this view of a Paris street is one of soft harmony and subdued early morning sunshine. (2) (4)

PAUL CÉZANNE (1839 - 1906)

STILL LIFE (painted about 1890)

Cézanne, finding fault with both the Impressionists' lack of substantial three-dimensional form, and the Realists' lack of strong decisive color, set himself the task of restoring these deficiencies to painting by using planes of color to render the shapes of solid forms. This painting by the fifty-one-year-old artist represents the beginning of his mature work. Note how successfully he has created an illusion of tactile weight and convincing space. (1) (2) (4)

(OVER)

ÉDOUARD MANET (1832 - 1883)
THE OLD MUSICIAN (dated 1862)

This canvas, painted when the artist was thirty, is one of Manet's most ambitious undertakings and a summation of his early style. The models are believed to have been Polish refugees who lived near the artist's studio in Paris. Several figures are adapted from earlier paintings, for example the cloaked man on the right is duplicated in his *Absinthe Drinker*, painted a few years earlier. In the composition and color harmonies Manet shows his debt to the seventeenth-century Spanish painter Velásquez (see Gallery 51). (2)

HENRI FANTIN-LATOURE (1836 - 1904)
STILL LIFE (dated 1866)

In his still lifes Fantin-Latour was a traditionalist deriving his style and technique from eighteenth-century painters like Chardin. The careful organization of texture, tone and color gives a sense of poetry to purely visual facts. (1) (2) (3)

AUGUSTE RENOIR (1841 - 1919)
BATHER ARRANGING HER HAIR (painted about 1900)

This painting represents the beginning of the late phase of Renoir's development when he was turning to a study of receding masses and volumes in space, and modeling them almost entirely in terms of color. (4)

GUSTAVE COURBET (1819 - 1877)
PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL (dated 1857)

Courbet was the leader of the Realist movement in French art. By painting his subjects exactly as they appeared to the eye, without embellishment of false romanticism, he sought to free French painting from the artificiality and pomp of officially approved academic traditions. The model here was a peasant girl from the east of France where Courbet was born.

AUGUSTE RENOIR (1841 - 1919)
A GIRL WITH A WATERING CAN (dated 1876)

This portrait of an unknown girl is one of the best loved paintings in America. In it Renoir, then thirty-five, demonstrates to perfection the theory and technique of Impressionism. Using little brush strokes of almost pure colors of the spectrum he suppresses all colorless shadow. The result is a radiant image of childhood amid a shimmering world of flowers and sunlight. (1) (2) (3) (4)

GUSTAVE COURBET (1819 - 1877)
A YOUNG WOMAN READING (painted between 1868 and 1872)

In this late study of an unknown model, Courbet, perhaps unconsciously influenced by the discoveries of Impressionism, has made an almost scientifically precise study of light reflections on clothing, book, and robust flesh.

EDGAR DEGAS (1834 - 1917)
THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF MORBILLI (painted about 1865)

The subjects of this partially completed group portrait are Degas' sister and her Italian banker husband. In the draftsmanlike precision of finished details, the artist, then about thirty-one, shows his debt to Ingres (see Gallery 56). The muted color harmonies and asymmetrical composition are, however, the hallmarks of Degas' personal style and genius.

JEAN-BAPTISTE-CAMILLE COROT (1796 - 1875)
ROCKS IN THE FOREST OF FONTAINEBLEAU (painted 1860 - 1865)

In the glimpse of a forest glade near Paris, Corot, approaching the end of his long and successful career as the master landscapist of the nineteenth century, uses his characteristic flecks of sunlight to guide our eye through the tangled mass of summer foliage.

Reproductions are available from the Gallery Information Rooms as indicated:

- (1) COLOR POSTCARDS at 5 cents each.
- (2) SMALL COLOR REPRODUCTIONS, 11" x 14", at 25 cents each.
- (3) LARGE COLOR REPRODUCTIONS at various prices.
- (4) ORIGINAL 2" x 2" COLOR SLIDES, cardboard mounted, at 35 cents each.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

Objects from the Widener Collection

Gallery G-2

Medieval works of art were often religious. Perhaps the finest work of its kind in the United States is the French Romanesque **CHALICE*** in *Case 1*. This was commissioned about 1140 A.D. by Abbot Suger, an outstanding personality of his day, for the rich and powerful abbey of Saint-Denis. The fluted sardonyx bowl of the chalice is antique. Its rich mounting is the part made by the abbot's goldsmiths. The rim, handles, shaft, and base are silver-gilt, set with rubies, emeralds, jades, and pearls. Of the gold embossed medallions on the base, the one of Christ is original. An **AQUAMANILE IN THE FORM OF A LION**, an ornamental, beautifully finished vessel for the washing of hands, was filled through an opening on top of the head; the mouth forms the spout. In the remaining objects, enamels of the *champlevé* technique, the design is cut out of the copper and filled in with an enamel paste of powdered glass and fused to the metal through heat. The **PYX IN THE FORM OF A DOVE**, symbol of the Holy Spirit, is a receptacle for the Eucharistic wafer, the Host. In 13th-century France such doves were suspended over the altar. The **CROSS** is a fine example of the Romanesque (Mosan) school. Such crosses stood on the altar on a bronze or rock-crystal base. The figure of Christ is of a later date and replaces a lost original. A **RELIQUARY** was made at Limoges to hold a relic, a small object identified with a saint or a sacred place; the gable roof is meant to suggest a church. It shows the Adoration of the Magi (front), Christ and four apostles, and human-headed birds in circles (roof). Romanesque art simplified nature and the human figure. The body compared to the soul was looked upon as transitory; it was neglected by the artist in favor of craftsmanship and decoration. The 14th-century Gothic **CIBORIUM** is a goblet-shaped vessel with a hinged lid surmounted by a cross and was used in the Mass for keeping the Sacred Host. The decoration, in blue-and-red enamel, represents the Crucifixion, Annunciation to the Virgin, Visitation, Resurrection, Nativity, and Annunciation to the Shepherds. The base shows Christ Enthroned and the Adoration of the Magi.

In *Case 2* is an **AQUAMANILE IN THE FORM OF A HORSEMAN**; the left hand may have held a falcon. The shape is functional: the horse's legs are short to insure stability; the neck is long for the pouring of water; and the torso, as a funnel, is thin. In a late **GOTHIC CARVED IVORY DIPTYCH**, framed by an inlaid border, the two panels open like a book; it was used for the devotional needs of an individual. The diptych illustrates the life of Christ; the twelve apostles are in the center of each side and angels are on the margins. Note the lacelike delicacy in such a scene as the Adoration of the Kings. Features are indicated and the hands of the kings hold gifts; though the ivory is cut to threadlike thinness, the action is clear.

In the center of *Case 3* is a late Gothic **MORSE**, a gold-and-enamel clasp for the fastening of a cope, a masterpiece of a Burgundian or French goldsmith around 1400. The center shows the Trinity, with God-the-Father holding up the crucifix like a gift to mankind. Realistic details appear in the finely-modeled head, in the emaciated Christ, and the twisted leaves of the pearl border. Sheets of gold are covered with translucent enamel. A **ROCK-CRYSTAL AND SILVER-GILT CRUET** was used in the Mass. The rock crystal is medieval; the mounting is by an English goldsmith, perhaps after a design by Holbein. The remaining objects in *Case 3* are unsigned Italian Renaissance jewels. To see how jewelry was used one should look at painted Renaissance portraits, such as the Bartolommeo Veneto (No. 368) and others, as shown on the main floor. In a **PENDANT WITH A CHALCEDONY HEAD OF A MEDUSA**, the blue-gray stone emanates a soft glow. The frame of chased gold and colored enamels has rubies, aquamarines, and a large pearl suspended from the base. A **PENDANT REPRESENTING A SPHINX**, part of an enameled-and-jeweled

gold necklace, is of the 16th century. The gems are cut with a few facets only and set in deep mounts; both sides are finished. Gold-and-enamel pendants are playful and inventive, as the CENTAUR with bow and arrow, the MERMAID, and the TRITON. The PENDANT REPRESENTING EUROPA ON THE BULL shows a figure seated on a massive bull, made of a pearl of irregular shape with parts added in gold and enamel.

In Cases 4, 5, and 6 are objects cut from rock crystal, the hardest of the quartz minerals, the working of which required infinite patience. Its transparency and purity give rock crystal a beauty of its own. During the 16th and 17th centuries rock crystal, ranking with precious stones, was available only to royalty, nobility, and church dignitaries. It was believed that a poison poured into a goblet of rock crystal would turn milky; rock crystal was, therefore, considered a safeguard against treachery. The cutting of rock crystal and gems was essentially an Italian industry; members of the Saracchi family of Milan were the leading gem cutters of Europe. With the development of a glass industry, rock crystal as a form of art disappeared. In Case 4, a RELIQUARY IN SHAPE OF A CROSS, South German, contains in the hollow glass shaft what, by tradition, was believed to be a splinter from the True Cross. The base, representing the hill of Golgotha, shows rocks, trees, plants, skulls, men and animals modeled realistically in gold in high relief or painted in enamel. The band around the base is ornamented with emeralds, rubies, and pearls. A CUP WITH LID, fluted and faceted, rests on a vase-shaped stem and an octagonal foot. The Schönburg coat of arms, the date 1566, and an inscription (in German) are on the gold rim beneath the lid. In Case 5 a Milanese ALTAR CROSS, in the style of the Saracchi workshop, is cut from a single piece of rock crystal. The base shows Christ carrying the Cross cut in intaglio to suggest relief. A DRINKING VESSEL IN THE SHAPE OF A FANTASTIC BIRD, Milanese, is sculpturesque, characteristic of the style toward the end of the 16th century. In Case 6 an Italian CYLINDRICAL BEAKER shows delicately engraved garlands and arabesques, and gold and enamel contrast with the translucent crystal. A Milanese VASE WITH COVER is carved in relief with acanthus leaves and on a VASE-SHAPED GOBLET a hunting scene combines relief with intaglio engraving.

In Case 7 are Renaissance bronze statuettes cast by the "lost wax" process and inspired by classical art. The dark color is due to a lacquer; where it has worn off the bronze shows through. A fine VASE-SHAPED MORTAR has the arms of Nicolo III (1393-1441), Marquis of Ferrara and Modena. The ecclesiastical hat tassels of the rim suggest that the original owner had been ordained a priest. The reliefs illustrate Fire, Water, Earth, and Air; Time with an hourglass and crutch stands opposite Death. On the other side is Insanity, a man trying to break his chains. The TRIANGULAR INKSTAND by Riccio, a sculptor of Padua, is one of the finest of Renaissance bronzes of its kind; and DAVID, by Bartolommeo Bellano, is represented as the shy boy, rather than the proud conqueror. In VIRTUE OVERCOMING VICE, Virtue looks down calmly on the grimacing Vice, represented with wings and tail to symbolize man's twofold nature of good and evil. MERCURY is represented as counting on his fingers, an appropriate action for the Roman god of commerce. A REARING HORSE has been attributed to different periods, and may be of the Italian, probably Florentine, Renaissance. In Case 8 is a group of NEPTUNE ON A SEA MONSTER by Severo da Ravenna, used originally as an inkstand. In Case 9 is HERCULES STRANGLING ANTAEUS, by Francesco da Sant' Agata. Instead of a life-and-death struggle, the artist emphasizes a rhythmic flow of line and avoids any mingling of contours.

Between Cases 1 and 2 is THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS, a bronze relief by Vincenzo Danti (1530-1576). The elongated figures of Christ and the Virgin show the influence of Michelangelo.

NOTE: An illustrated Gallery handbook, "Objects of Medieval Art," by Eriola O. Christensen, is for sale in the Information Rooms—Price, 35 cents.

* 11" x 14" color print priced at 25 cents each.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WIDENER COLLECTION

Chinese Porcelains

GALLERIES G-4, G-5, and G-6

Chinese ceramics reached a culmination during the reign of three Manchu emperors, known as the Ch'ing Dynasty: K'ang Hsi (1662-1722), the contemporary of Louis XIV of France; his son, Yung Cheng (1723-1735); and his grandson, Ch'ien Lung (1736-1795), a contemporary of George Washington. By that time Chinese porcelains had been exported to all civilized countries. Porcelain is translucent, vitrified throughout, very white, hard and sonant. Chinese art is clear, logical and distinguished by a linear rhythm. To line and form, dominant in the earlier ceramics, the K'ang-hsi period adds a fullness of shape, a mature opulence and the full glory of color in painted decoration. Most of the porcelains in this collection have the decorations painted on the partially fired *unglazed* surface, called biscuit. There are several varieties: a *famille noire* (black), a *famille verte* (green), and a *famille rose*. A second method of decoration is enamel painting *over the glaze*. A third, underglaze painting in cobalt blue or copper oxide red, is not represented in this collection.

In Case 1 in A PAIR OF BUDDHIST LIONS WITH STANDS the crisp modeling suggests bronze used at an earlier period. Such highly stylized lions were placed on the domestic altar of the larger Chinese house as guardians of the Buddhist faith. (1)

In Case 4 in the TWO BLACK BEAKERS the lustrous black is painted after the decorations have been completed and is then covered with a glaze showing a tinge of green. Because these vases have designs of the blossoming twigs of plum trees which resemble the hawthorn, they are known as hawthorn vases.

In Case 7 thin or eggshell porcelains represent the highest skill of Chinese pottery in HEXAGONAL LANTERNS of spectacular translucency. The enamel painting (*famille verte*) is here applied in the *overglaze* technique. Where pieces are designed in sets, as in TWELVE WINE CUPS with a TALL WINE EWER, the Chinese do not make one exactly like the other, but strive for variety, as in the shapes of the cups.

In Case 8 are three RETICULATED GLOBES and one RETICULATED GLOBULAR BOX used suspended for fragrant flowers and on stands as incense burners or cricket cages.

In Case 10 in the GREEN DRAGON VASE, painted in colored enamels on the *unglazed* porcelain (biscuit), dragons unfold in mighty serpentine curves and bubbles rise from twisting seaweed. Of the decorative arts Chinese porcelains come nearest to a universal language of beauty; line, form, and color are united in unrivalled purity and simplicity. (1)

In Case 11 in the BLACK BEAKER (center) note the vigorous drawing in the firm lines of the fully-rounded white blossoms, each painted with a full body of pigment.

In Case 12 the TALL WHITE BEAKER WITH RED BLOSSOMS is another fine example of *overglaze* technique which shows up the brush strokes on the white glaze background. In such vases the eighteenth century produced some of the finest Chinese porcelains, now the treasures of the great collections of the world. (1)

In Case 13 in the RECTANGULAR FOUR-SEASONS VASE (the one on the right), each season is represented by its flower: the peony for spring, the lotus for summer, the chrysanthemum for autumn, and the plum for winter. Each month and each feast day has its own particular flower but even a large vase would contain but a single branch of a flowering shrub. (OVER)

In Case 14 a PORCELAIN STAND, made to hold a scholar's scrolls and pencils, shows a traditional pattern called the "Hundred Antiques" which includes two peacock feathers and a stick of coral, an emblem of rank indicating that the owner was a mandarin holding office. Four PLATES WITH RUBY BACKS of pure eggshell porcelain and the one ROSE BACK PLATE (center) are of the *famille rose*. They show miniature paintings in transparent enamels with an appeal of color and texture, line and pattern. The backs are in opaque red called *rouge d'or*, as the red is derived from gold. This *rouge d'or* was invented in Europe about 1650 and then adopted by the Chinese in response to European demand. It was the basis of the *famille rose* group or "foreign colors."

In Galleries G-5 and G-6 four groups of monochrome porcelains are represented by examples of great beauty, the light sea-green celadons, the most ancient of Chinese monochromes, the bluish *clair de lunes*, the peach blooms and the deep red *sang de boeufs* (oxbloods).

In Case 15 are celadons and peach blooms. Three CELADON VASES represent this glaze in all its perfection. The color is subdued grayish green, the glaze has the pellucid depth peculiar to Chinese monochromes, and the surface reflects light in a soft glow and takes the shadow in an evenly graded tone. Shapes with long necks and short bulb-like bodies suggest languid grace; the one with the slender body and short neck is almost severe by comparison. A border in relief around the lower portion resembles the petals of the chrysanthemum. In the peach blooms the interest is one of reds and greens in mottled and speckled effects due to happy accidents that took place in the firing. Four SMALL BOXES WITH COVERS, used on the scholar's desk to hold his red seal color, have rich velvety tints. Case 16 is filled with rare PEACH BLOOMS. In Case 17 the *clair de lunes* (moon-whites) of pale blue glaze include FLAT WATER BOWLS, BRUSH WASHERS and FLOWER VASES. The softness and purity of the mirror-like surface, the colors and shapes create a striking effect. In Case 18 a connection with the emperor is indicated in a YELLOW WATER POT, a brush washer, by the imperial yellow and the medallions, which have been interpreted as dragons, engraved under the glaze. (1)

In Case 19 a WHITE BOWL has an incised floral pattern which was cut before the translucent glaze was applied. Seen against the light or filled with dark liquid the pattern is luminous. Two SMALL WHITE VASES are both of so-called soft paste with a creamy white glaze.

In Case 20 in a GREEN VASE with dragon handles (Ming Dynasty) the body widens to a gentle fullness and then narrows to a graceful flare. In Case 21 a WHITE MONOCHROME VASE has an elegant profile, a shape of compelling grace and an immaculate surface. Two DEEP APPLE-GREEN JARS are thick and show a well-marked dark crackle.

In Cases 22 and 23 are the SANG DE BOEUF VASES. Among the most famous of K'ang-hsi vases are these brilliant reds derived from copper oxide. The hues range from lighter ruby reds to deeper mottled tones with the darkest hues on the shoulder and above the base where the glaze runs thicker. Too much oxygen in the kiln caused a burning out of the red resulting in gray or gray-blue streaks. On the true *sang de boeufs* we have a crackled glaze, translucent and lightly tinged with a copper-red turning on maroon, an effect known as ashes of roses. On each of these three vases we note another characteristic of the glaze, the formation of minute bubbles as if particles of dust had been caught. (1)

Case 24 shows a set of ROUGE D'OR JARS and two BEAKERS of a soft opaque red and an eggshell texture, and in Case 25 two CELADON VASES and two CELADON EWERS in the form of fish, with eighteenth century gilt bronze (ormolu) mounts. The mirror-like smoothness of the glaze and the light green and blue-green color are set off by the gold. Such vases were used in Europe in interiors of the Louis XVI style.

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(1) COLOR POSTCARDS at 5 cents each.

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