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ST. MICHAEL

PETER PAUL RUBENS

GIFT OF THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART

FOUNDERS SOCIETY

## SKETCHES BY RUBENS AND VAN DYCK

It is a curious fact that while technical and economical conditions are more and more replacing individual production in industry, trade and the crafts by collaborative working methods, the trend seems to be an almost opposite one in the field of art. It is well known that nearly all the leading masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries employed assistants and that even in the eighteenth century painters like Reynolds and others made extensive use of some of their younger or less successful fellow artists as so-called "drapery men" for rendering or finishing the costumes in their portraits. We would, on the other hand, hardly expect to find a composition by Renoir partly done by Mary Cassatt or a painting by Derain not entirely by the master's own hand.

There are two outstanding reasons for this change. The modern system of art schools and academies has practically eliminated the individual workshop in which, for many years, the young apprentice lived, learned and worked in closest personal contact with his master. With the workshop has gone, too, what we call "workshop pictures." The other reason is connected with the political and economical changes which have taken place in the course of the last century. The princes and other high-born customers have disappeared, and with them, the aristocratic and art-loving leaders of the church. There are no more palaces being built and there is no longer any need for great monumental decorations glorifying man or God; the social leaders of our modern democracies are often either lacking the taste and cultural background to demand and appreciate such things, or they are afraid by so

doing to "provoke" the lower classes. Thus, the houses of even the richest are small compared to those which the well-to-do middle class of former times regarded as comfortably "spacious," and the modern artist who is expected to adorn these homes with paintings of adequate size can easily do so without the help of others. If, however, we consider such gigantic commissions as, for instance, that given by the king of Spain to Rubens, who furnished for one castle alone no less than 112 paintings within two years, we will readily understand why the participation of assistants in these enterprises was unavoidable.

In Rubens's case we are especially well informed, through letters of the master and other documents, regarding the working methods practised in these large studios. After receiving the order, the master made small sketches in oil,<sup>1</sup> which were submitted to the judgment of the respective patrons. When approved, the composition was drawn by pupils on the canvas or panel in the desired size and underpainted in brownish-grey shades. The execution proper of the painting in oil was then frequently done by assistants under the master's supervision, the finishing touches being added by him. Only in comparatively rare instances did Rubens do the whole work himself.<sup>2</sup> In a list of twelve paintings that he offers to the Earl of Arundel in exchange for some antique marbles he is anxious to have in his collection, there is only one which he himself describes as "entirely by my own hand." As to van Dyck, we may well believe that he followed similar practices, especially during his English period, when the rush of customers was overwhelming.

1. Rubens himself speaks of "*disegni coloriti*" (colored designs). Since, however, there are no colored pen or pencil drawings preserved, he undoubtedly means by that expression the oil sketches.
2. For instance, in the case of portraits of members of his own family or of intimate friends.

All this by way of explaining why of all the works attributed to these great Flemish painters, their small sketches are by far the most reliable documents of their own art. They

ing. They often reveal traces of changes and improvements in composition tested and gradually worked out, thus offering us a glimpse into the very act of creating; and, above all, they are



PORTRAIT SKETCH OF LUCAS VAN UFFEL  
ANTHONY VAN DYCK  
GIFT OF THE DETROIT MUSEUM OF ART  
FOUNDERS SOCIETY

have all the freshness and spontaneity of a first thought; they breathe the happiness of inspiration. Their brushwork is at once bold, direct, vigorous, yet hesitating, groping, carefully search-

wholly original, i. e., absolutely free of the heterogeneous influences brought in by assistants even when under the most rigid surveillance of the master. (For, while the poorer ones among the pupils

are lacking in skill, the better ones cannot help instilling something of their own personality, even in the painting of only a minor detail.) Considering the importance—if not the indispensability—of an intimate knowledge of these small “colored designs” in the study of Rubens and van Dyck, it must be regarded as a very happy coincidence that our museum has come into the possession of no less than three of these little gems at one time. One, a *grisaille*



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. GEORGE  
ANTHONY VAN DYCK  
GIFT OF MR. A. S. DREY

by van Dyck, is the generous gift of the A. S. Drey Gallery, New York; the other two, *St. Michael* by Rubens and a portrait sketch by van Dyck, were presented by the Founders Society.

Most delightful is the Rubens sketch. There is no direct connection between the young hero-angel in glistening ar-

mour who fights the fiends of hell, and any other known work by Rubens. The only large painting by the master dealing with the same subject is *The Fall of the Rebellious Angels* in the Munich Pinakothek done in 1622 entirely by Rubens's own hands (as we know from letters) for Count Wolfgang Wilhelm of the Palatinate. The differences in the positions of the main figures, however, are such that we can hardly assume the sketch to be a study for this painting, particularly as its technical and coloristic qualities would indicate a somewhat later date of execution (around 1630).<sup>1</sup> The little picture, at any rate, in its noble conception, its utter freedom of brushwork and its exquisite coloring, represents the great master at his best.

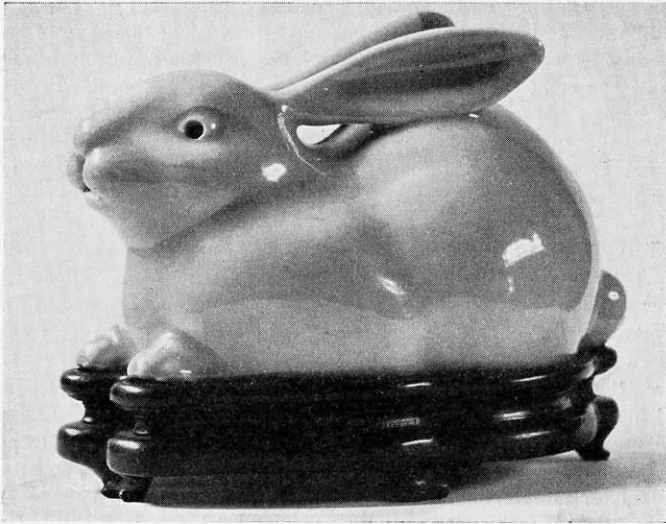
Of the two sketches by van Dyck, one is a black-and-white study (*en grisaille*) for an altarpiece, with the squares already marked off for the enlargement. A young male saint kneeling on a platform is represented. While executioners prepare him for his death, the heavens open and angels carrying the crown of martyrdom come to receive his soul. In the foreground, horsemen and other figures recoil in terror. The scene has been called<sup>2</sup> *The Martyrdom of St. George*, who, in fact, did die by the sword in A. D. 305, but it might as well represent the death of some other martyr. There is no known altarpiece by the master based on this study. Related in subject matter, but entirely different in composition, is *The Death of the Apostle St. James the Elder*, in the museum at Valenciennes. Stylistically, the sketch is closely related to similar ones<sup>3</sup> done during the master's second Antwerp period; it was most likely painted around 1630.

1. A "slight but very masterly sketch," too, of *St. Michael* treading Satan under his feet, mentioned in Smith, *Catalogue Raisonné*, as having been sold at Christie's in 1829, cannot be identical with our piece because of the difference in dimensions.
2. In the catalog of the Warneck Collection in Paris, to which the picture formerly belonged.
3. For instance, the sketch for the so-called *Christ and the Sponge* in the Brussels Museum.

Very interesting is the last of the three pieces, a small study for the portrait of Lucas van Uffel in the Altman collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York. We can see that van Dyck followed his hastily jotted down study very closely in his final edition; he only cuts down the format considerably, thus giving more weight and strength to the figure. Both the sketch and the final picture undoubtedly belong to the Italian period of the master

(1622-27). Lucas van Uffel, the man represented, was a very wealthy Antwerp merchant living in Genoa and a keen art collector, who owned, among other treasures, Raphael's most beautiful portrait of Baldassare Castiglione (now in the Louvre). He was an intimate friend of the artist, who painted him a second time, this portrait now being in the Braunschweig Museum.

WALTER HEIL.



LUNG-CH'UAN PORCELAIN RABBIT  
GIFT OF MRS. WALTER R. PARKER

## THE CHINESE RABBIT

Through the generosity of Mrs. Walter R. Parker, the permanent Chinese collection of the Institute has been enriched by the addition of one of the most popular items shown in the recent Loan Exhibition of Chinese Art. This is the small celadon porcelain rabbit, number 27 in the catalogue of the Exhibition.

In his crouching position the figure measures  $7\frac{13}{16}$  inches from nose to tail,  $4\frac{15}{16}$  inches across the haunches, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches in greatest height. The average thickness of the wall is three-eighths of an inch. That the piece was made by pressing the paste into a mould is evident from the interior surface, and under the highest

point of the back several finger prints in the biscuit are clearly apparent. No trace of a seam is visible on the smooth exterior. The mouth and both eyes were pierced from the outside after moulding, and there are two well concealed holes in the head back of and below the ears.

The paste is smooth, only slightly gray, and burned red on the exposed foot-rim. Very small, thread-like crow-foot tracks appear in the biscuit under the glaze, notably back of the shoulders, around the neck and under the chin. A very few incised lines in the biscuit indicate whiskers and the hair along the lower edges of the ears and on the stumpy tail. The right ear-tip has been restored.

A rich, transparent glaze of a green that at times is as blue as the glaze of Ying Ch'ing ware covers the exterior and all of the interior except a patch at the highest point of the back and a small spot inside the left eye. The color deepens in the incised lines and where the glaze is thick in the hollows, while on such areas as the upper edges of the ears, the eyes and superciliary ridges, and the tops of the forepaw toes, it pales to an almost clear white. On close examination the glaze is discovered to be full of minute bubbles, none of which, however, breaks the smooth surface.

The characteristics of the ware as described, the gray-white biscuit, the red-burned foot where the unglazed ferruginous clay was exposed, and the peculiar blue-green color, all point to the Lung-ch'üan district in Chekiang province as the place of origin of our rabbit. In this district the finest and most famous examples of the green-glazed porcelain we call celadon were produced. The ware seems to have been made there through the Sung, Yüan and Ming dynasties, while imitative pieces have been made at Ching-te Chen since

early times. But most famous of the potters of Lung-ch'üan were the brothers Chang, who worked in the town of Liu-t'ien in the thirteenth century. The younger excelled in an especially fine celadon ware called *Chang yao*, and to the description given by Hobson<sup>1</sup> of work of this type, our piece, with its glaze of singular blueness, bubbly, and white in places, closely conforms.

Could we definitely call it *Chang yao*, we should be certain of our date, but there is another criterion that points surely to the Sung dynasty as its time of creation. That is the style of the modelling. The artist was well aware of the rabbit's physical nature, for the form is subtly simplified to its essential surfaces with the sureness of competent knowledge. Further, the spirit of the rabbit is admirably realized in the tenseness of the apparently restful pose, and the timidly courageous poise of the head. This understanding revelation of both form and spirit is characteristically Sung, and beside ours the rabbits of later times (we can remember or discover none that is contemporary) seem almost grotesque.

Whether our piece was ever intended to perform a function other than its present one of giving exquisite pleasure to those who take time to see it, we cannot say; nor is the question important. We might observe, however, that the Chinese "man in the moon" is a white rabbit, and that the rabbit or hare is the fourth of the twelve animals of the duodenary cycle.

Especially significant is the interest shown in the rabbit by contemporary sculptors of modern outlook, and their admiration for the expressive simplicity of its treatment. The artist must remain unknown, but his work, tempered by his own time, has an ageless quality that gives him a contact with reality six centuries after his death.

BENJAMIN MARCH.

1. R. L. Hobson: *Catalogue of the George Eumorfopoulos Collection of Chinese, Korean and Persian Pottery and Porcelain*, Vol. II. London, 1926, p. 22.

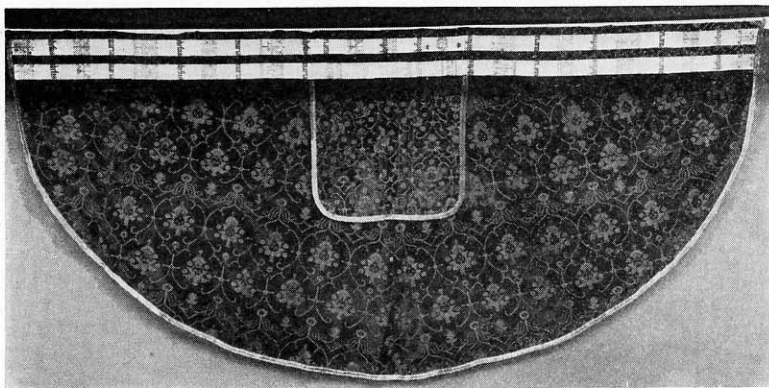
## A GOTHIC VELVET COPE

The Textile Department has acquired as the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edsel B. Ford, a cope of deep sapphire blue velvet, of the second half of the fifteenth century.

The cope (*cappa, pluviale*) is worn by the priest at certain ecclesiastical functions other than mass. Originally it was a mantle with a hood. Later it was cut in semi-circular shape, and held together on the breast by a spangle (*monilia, fibula*) of gold or silver, or a short band of embroidery. In the

is surmounted by a flower with thistle leaves. The hood is pieced together of six fragments of a similar, but smaller and more crowded, pattern of the same shade of blue.

The border consists of two bands of gold borders, each  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, edged with plain blue velvet. Weave and ornament are typical of the so-called Cologne orphreys. "The weave is a fancy compound twill, with two warps entirely concealed by the wefts, and the ground weft, of gilt goldbeater's skin



VELVET COPE  
GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. EDSSEL B. FORD

early Middle Ages the hood was replaced by a flat shield (*scutum*), and the straight front of the cope was finished with a border (*aurifrisia*). Both shield and border were generally adorned with rich embroidery; sometimes the entire vestment was covered with needlework on plain material, but more often the vestments were made of some elaborately patterned fabric.

Our cope consists of cut voided satin velvet,<sup>1</sup> *velour ciselé*, of two different patterns. The velvet of the mantle shows a large double ogive with two variants of simple pomegranates with four small flowers each, the upper ogive

wound about a linen thread, woven to form a herringbone pattern. Extra wefts of colored silks are introduced where needed for the design, and there is also a continuous white linen weft that does not appear on the surface. Additional details were sometimes embroidered in the patterns after the pieces left the looms. These narrow webs, with only a cord for selvage, were woven in imitation of embroidered orphreys.<sup>22</sup>

Cologne appears as a center of this type of weaving as early as the tenth century, as we know from fragments found in the tomb of St. Bruno of

1. Nancy Andrews Reath, *The Weaves of Hand-Loom Fabrics*; Philadelphia, 1927. p. 44.  
2. *Ibid.*, p. 32.



DETAIL OF COPE

Cologne (d. 965), and from fragments of the mantle of the emperor Henry II (d. 1042). Shortly before 1400 a Cologne weaver is reported to have woven borders for the king of France and the duke of Burgundy.<sup>1</sup> In the fifteenth century the Cologne borders show typical patterns, influenced by neither the figured fabrics from Lucca, nor the elaborately woven figural orphreys from Florence, both of which were imported in large quantities. Witte<sup>2</sup> gives a list of five types of ornament prevailing in the Cologne borders of the fifteenth century. The borders of our cope belong to the second type, with inscriptions of *jhesus-maria*, and

stars, rosettes, stripes, and little trees. The weaving of these borders comes to an end soon after 1500. The professional weavers seem to have suffered towards the end from the competition of the Beghine nuns.

An additional interest is given to our cope by the fact that it was first used as a mantle, possibly by a knight of the Burgundian court. Hidden by the shield is a semi-circular cut, now patched with a piece of plain blue velvet. This and the fact that the shield is obviously a later addition for which velvet of the same color and pattern had to be obtained painstakingly, point to the fact that a highly valued garment was donated to a church, presumably after the first owner's death. Long cloaks or capes, sometimes edged with fur or finished with a collar, were worn by both men and women. The precious Italian velvets were largely produced for the markets of Burgundy, as we know from literary sources as well as from Flemish paintings and tapestries. The ecclesiastical beneficiaries, obviously not as wealthy as their patron, instead of completing the cope with embroidered shield and border, made a shift with velvet fragments for the shield and the less costly *aurifrisia* from the neighboring city, Cologne. And, since blue is not one of the canonical colors, blue vestments are rare and can in many cases be traced back to secular origin.

ADELE COULIN WEIBEL.

## A BRONZE CANDLESTICK OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

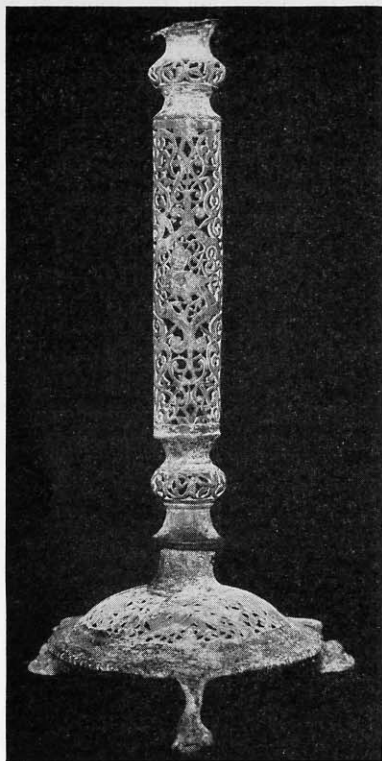
Compared with the more numerous examples of inlaid and engraved metal vessels of the Islamic middle ages which have become known, the pieces with open work decorations are relatively rare, and the few examples which have

been preserved do not suffice to trace the technical and stylistical development of this group.

The technique of open work is known to have been in use in nearly all of the Orient since early pre-Islamic times.

1. Moritz Dreger, *Kuenstlerische Entwicklung der Weberci und Stickerei*; Vienna, 1904, p. 196.
2. Fritz Witte, *Die liturgischen Gewaender und kirchlichen Stickereien des Schnuetgen-museums Kochn*; Berlin, 1926, p. 13.





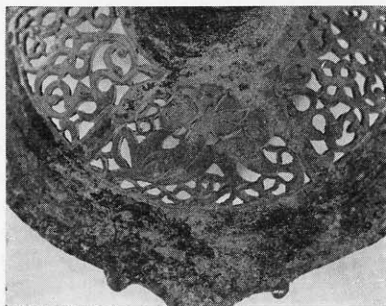
ISLAMIC CANDELTICK, XIII CENTURY

On the one hand we find it already perfected in the Coptic period in Egypt, and on the other in a highly developed form in the whole of inner Asia, but how the development spread to the Persian-Mesopotamian region remains in darkness, owing to the scarcity of material. One thing is certain, however, that in this region the open work technique in metal was practised before the age of Islam, the practical knowledge of the technique receiving its Islamic imprint in the Islamic era, especially in the eleventh and the following centuries, a time of the maturing of its most beautiful creations.

We have an example of this period of finest flowering in the candlestick

which was acquired in the past year for the Islamic Department of the Institute. It is eighteen inches in height, cast of bronze, and is of a form common to Islamic candlesticks. A cylindrical body, with heavy moulding at top and bottom, rises from a slightly curved plate, supported by three feet; part of the upper rim of the candlestick is missing. Both the curved base and the cylindrical stem are pierced with a rich ornamentation. Fine geometric arabesque tendrils, interlaced in symmetrical arrangement, and bearing full and half palmettes, surround medallions. The two scalloped full medallions with arabesque patterns on the cylinder contain a siren surrounded by tendrils; the three half-medallions on the base each contain a sphinx. The limbs of the animals are outlined with engraved lines.

There is no symbolic significance in the representation of the fabulous beings in Islamic art, as is often asserted. They are used purely as decorative motives. To this ornamental conception belong not only the fabulous animals introduced from East Asia, but also the sphinx and the siren, borrowed from the old Orient, which frequently appear in Islamic art after the year 1000. From countless examples, such as the Persian fayence, Mesopotamian metal work, and Seljukian-Anatolian stone sculpture, all of which represent the sphinx in varied



DETAIL OF CANDELTICK

stylistic forms, we offer here only one example for comparison. This is a bronze basin with a rich silver inlay, made between 1233 and 1259 at the order of Atabek Bedredin Lulu, and now in the Staats Bibliothek in Munich.<sup>1</sup> The middle circle of the inner decoration shows four sphinxes, which have an especially striking relationship in form with those on our candlestick. The advancing posture, with raised right front foot, the slender formation of the body, and, above all, the portrayal of the head, without hair or head covering, are in both pieces similar in even the smallest details. This similarity alone allows us to date the candlestick in the thirteenth century. The only difference

is in the joining of the wings of the sphinxes.

The second fabulous animal, the siren, also had the same form in all representations. One can compare, for instance, the stone relief in the museum in Konia, which was executed before 1300 and which shows the same characteristics of form.<sup>2</sup> The head of the siren, seen in profile on the relief, shows the same cap with hair falling in a wide lock that we see on the candlestick. Finally, the arabesque tendrils have the same characteristic features of the thirteenth century. This candlestick greatly enriches the collection of the Institute by an extraordinarily important example, and is well worth special study.

MEHMET AGA-OGLU.

## AN EXHIBITION OF TAPESTRIES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

A loan exhibition of European tapestries of the eighteenth century will open on March 7th and continue through March 30th. The exhibition will comprise important works of French, Flemish, English and Russian looms. The three French royal factories, Gobelins, Beauvais and Aubusson, will be represented with tapestries and screens, which will make possible a close study of the ornament and pictorial aims of the period of Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI. The short interlude of the Regency is especially well illustrated by two screens, blending stateliness and frivolity. The Beauvais and Aubusson panels, some of them designed by François Boucher, others by Pillement and Huet, and woven by the greatest craftsmen of their time, give a picture of the vanishing rococo. The Flemish looms are represented with one of the finest

tapestries ever woven from a cartoon by Teniers and by some panels that compete successfully with the Gobelins, both for design and craftsmanship. The English tapestries demonstrate the Indo-Chinese influence which blended so well with the Western ornament. The Russian tapestries will be of special interest, combining Eastern design and Western craft.

Two tapestry portraits, one of George Washington, after a portrait by Gilbert Stuart, the other of Catherine the Great of Russia, will add a personal note, and the heroic and idyllic scenes, the green landscapes and the purely ornamental grotesques with flowers, animals and figurines, will give a colorful picture of a century when men knew how to combine the painters' art with that most princely of all the crafts, the weaving of tapestries.

1. Fr. Sarre and M. van Berchem. "Das Metallbecken des Atabek Lulu von Mosul in der Kgl. Bibliothek zu München" *Münchener Jahrbuch der Kunst*, I. 1907.
2. Fr. Sarre, "Erzeugnisse islamischer Kunst," Teil II, *Seldschukische Kleinkunst*, Leipzig, 1909, Fig. 18.

## EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN COLONIAL AND EARLY FEDERAL ART

An exhibition of American Colonial and Early Federal Art, the twelfth in the Institute's series of important loan exhibitions, was shown during the month of February in the exhibition galleries on the main floor. It comprised furniture, paintings, silver, glass, pottery and textiles, and aimed to show the finest work produced in these fields by the early artists and craftsmen. The exhibition was arranged in a series of six period rooms partitioned off from the main exhibition gallery and painted and papered as rooms of the period might have been, showing in sequence the different types of the decorative arts of the eighteenth century, from its first days to about 1800. A seventh room, the corner exhibition gallery, was furnished with the Duncan Phyfe furniture in vogue during the opening years of the nineteenth century and hung with paintings by Copley, Stuart and Sully.

In the last gallery there were arranged in cases representative collections of fine silver, pewter and glass, which was made in America during this period, together with two cases of early stoneware and pottery. On the walls in this room were hung the French and English *toiles de Jouy*, *chintzes* and block-printed fabrics imported by the Colonists to enliven their homes, an interesting series of panels of Alsatian wall paper painted with American scenes, and an important collection of

water colors painted about 1810, showing scenes in and about Philadelphia.

The arrangement of the exhibition not only facilitated the study of the chronological development of American furniture, but enabled the student to familiarize himself with the output of the different localities and to learn more about the work of individual cabinet makers. Thus, one room was furnished entirely with pieces of the Chippendale style furniture made in Philadelphia, another with the Duncan Phyfe furniture of New York, a third with New England pieces in the Sheraton and Hepplewhite styles, and along the end walls of the large gallery there was arranged a selection of the fine block-front pieces made in Rhode Island. Many pieces in the exhibition could be assigned with some certainty to the best-known American cabinet makers, such as John Goddard, Aaron Chapin, Benjamin Frothingham, William Savery, Aaron Willard, and possibly Benjamin Randolph. It afforded an excellent opportunity to forward the study of the decorative arts of America in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, a study which began only fifteen or twenty years ago and which is still far from complete.

The exhibition was made possible through generous loans from private collectors in Detroit, Boston, and Annapolis and Laurel, Maryland, and from dealers in New York, Boston and Freehold, New Jersey.

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# CALENDAR OF LECTURES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

## SUNDAY AFTERNOON TALKS

Lecture Hall at 3:30 P. M.

March 2, 3:30 P. M. "Hans Holbein, Painter to Henry VIII," by Marion Leland, Museum Instructor.

Beginning Sunday, March 9, and continuing throughout the month, Mrs. A. C. Weibel, Curator of Textiles, will give a series of talks on the current Exhibition of European Tapestries of the Eighteenth Century.

March 9, 3:30 P. M. "French Tapestries."

March 16, 3:30 P. M. "Flemish Tapestries."

March 23, 3:30 P. M. "Tapestries of other Countries."

March 30, 3:30 P. M. "Summary of the Exhibition."

Incidental Music by The Chamber Music Society.

## TUESDAY EVENING LECTURES AND MUSICALES

Auditorium at 8:15 P. M.

March 4, 8:15 P. M. "The Neo-Classic School." Lecture by Frank Bishop, Curator of Music.

March 11, 8:15 P. M. Lecture by Rockwell Kent, painter and etcher.

March 18, 8:15 P. M. "The Neo-Classicists." Concert by Frank Bishop, Curator of Music.

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON GALLERY TOURS

Leave Information Desk at 3:00 P. M.

March 4, 3:00 P. M. "Some Seventeenth Century Dutch Masters" (Galleries 4, 5, and 6).

March 11, 3:00 P. M. "A Venetian Palace Room" (Gallery 9).

March 18, 3:00 P. M. "Chinese Art" (Galleries 24 and 25).

March 25, 3:00 P. M. "Eighteenth Century Tapestries" (Temporary Exhibition Galleries).

## FRIDAY EVENING ORGAN RECITALS

Auditorium at 8:15 P. M.

March 7, 8:15 P. M. Marshall Bidwell.

March 14, 8:15 P. M. Alma Sloan.

March 21, 8:15 P. M. Frederick B. Stivens.

March 28, 8:15 P. M. L. Marie Hacker (piano recital).

## SATURDAY MORNING PHOTOPLAYS FOR CHILDREN

Auditorium at 10:15 A. M.

March 1, 10:15 A. M. Story Hour, "Some American Painters"; Photoplay, "The Eve of the Revolution."

March 8, 10:15 A. M. "Vasantasena" (A Story of the Tenth Century in India); "Columbus."

March 15, 10:15 A. M. "Sculpture in Stone"; "The Puritans."

March 22, 10:15 A. M. Story Hour, "Glorious Days in Italy"; Photoplay, "The Gateway to the West."

March 29, 10:15 A. M. "The Pottery Maker"; "The Making of Wrought Iron"; and "Dixie."

## CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Loan Exhibition of European Tapestries of the Eighteenth Century, March 7-March 30.

Loan Exhibition of Contemporary German Graphic Art.