



NEWS BULLETIN AND CALENDAR, JANUARY 1969

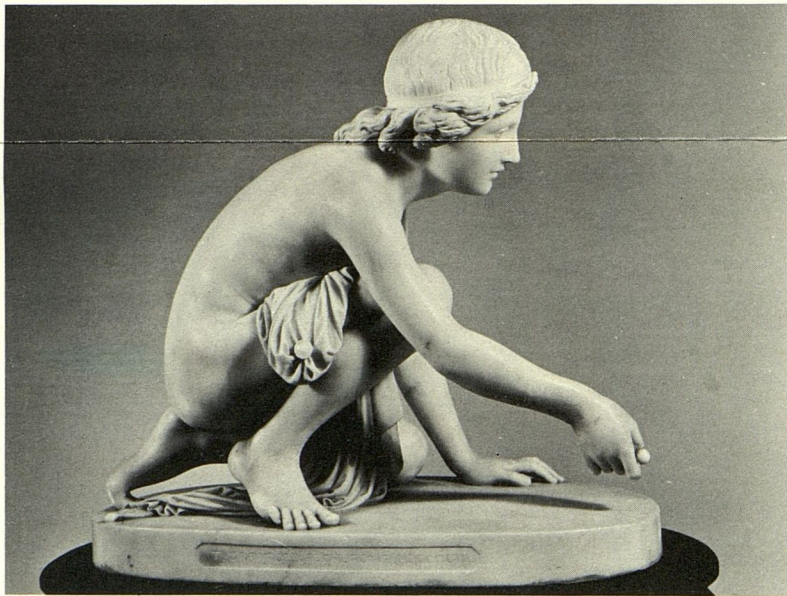
WORCESTER ART MUSEUM

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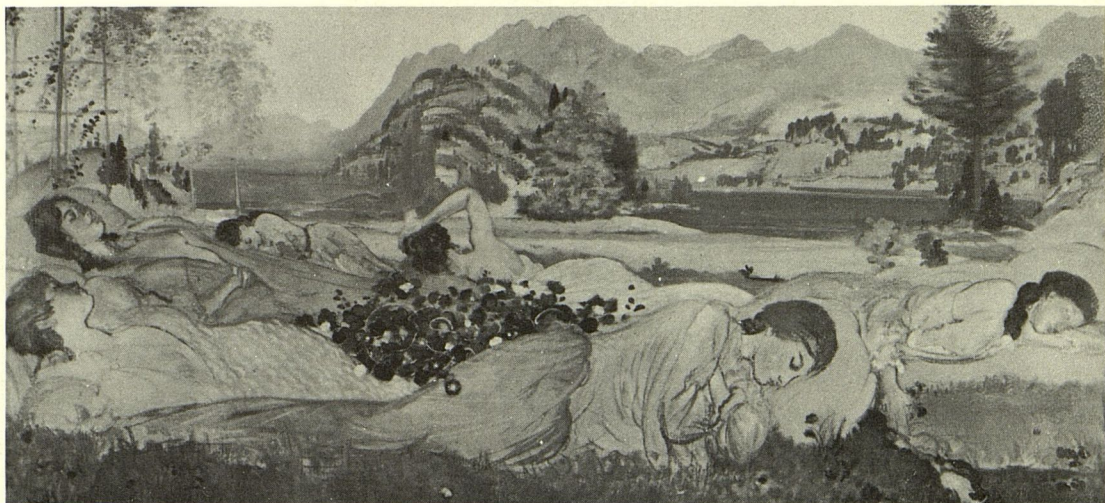
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Portraits of these years range from *George Buckham* by the well-trained Henry Inman, the bequest of the sitter's daughter whose own portrait with her mother by the same artist is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, to a fascinating group of five profiles by Ruth Henshaw Bascom, a native of Leicester, done in 1837 and 1839, of Mary (Smith) Davis, her daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren, donated by her great-granddaughter, Mary Davis Thurston. From the sparse representation of the first decades of the exhibition period one passes to



the much more numerous works of the '70's, '80's and '90's with Inness, Bierstadt, Hunt, La-Farge, Whistler, Wyant, Eakins, Ryder, Blakelock and others represented by more than one work. This trend continues for works dating through the first two decades of the twentieth century. A number of artists of this fifty-year span are represented by larger groups indicating the continued enthusiasm of collectors and museum officials. Outstanding are the Winslow Homers. To a group of purchases the 1937 bequest of Grenville H. Norcross of Boston, a relative of the artist, added a water color dated 1883 and a drawing, *Girl with Shell at Ear* of 1880, a gift to Mr. Norcross from Homer. With the amazing collection of Theodore T. and Mary G. Ellis of Worcester came in 1940 a large oil, *Coast in Winter*, and in 1946 Dr. Roger Kinnicutt gave *The School Girl*, which his father had purchased.

Another group, fostered by the generous enthusiasm of one trustee-donor, Charlotte E. W. Buffington, and with additions from the Ellis Collection, illustrates the work of Childe Hassam.

Dominating the early twentieth century section are the works of Sargent, and there are notable paintings by other artists, among them Mary Cassatt, Benson and Tarbell of Boston, Bellows, Maurice Prendergast, Shinn and Arthur B. Davies. The sinuous *Sleep* by Davies (reproduced above) has been widely exhibited both during the lifetime of the artist and recently but it has been little seen here. A newly acquired print by Davies, *Doorway to Illusion*, is a feature of that section of the exhibition.

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Cover: John Frederick Kensett, American (1816-1872), CONWAY VALLEY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, oil on canvas, 32-3/4 x 48 in. Signed, lower left: F.K/54. Museum purchase, 1961.

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postage paid at Worcester, Massachusetts  
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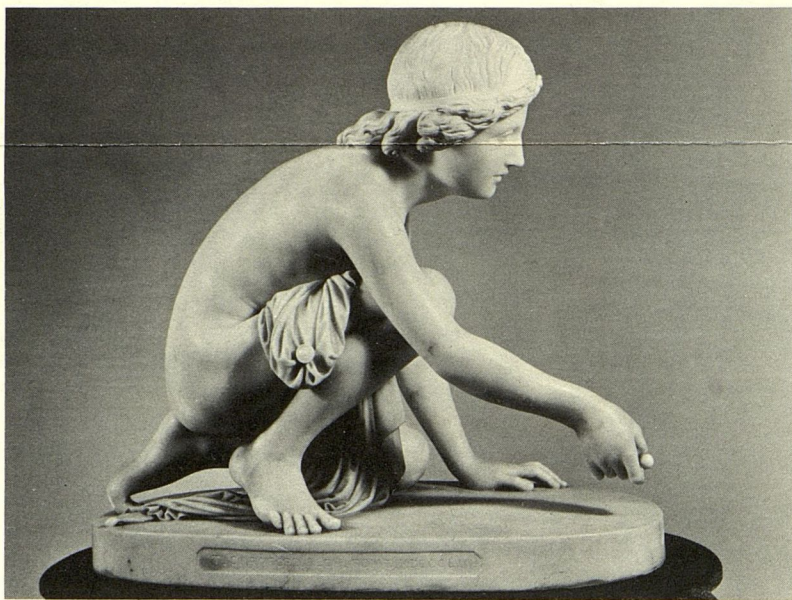
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## ALLEGORY ON DRINKING

Just recently the Worcester Art Museum acquired a splendid painting by Gerrit van Honthorst, the famous seventeenth-century Dutch artist from Utrecht.<sup>1</sup> This picture is typical of the Caravaggesque work produced by Honthorst shortly after his return from Italy in 1620. He did not, as far as I know, paint pictures of this type during his Italian sojourn. They seem to have been a well-received counterpart to the candlelit scenes that Honthorst began to paint in Italy and which brought him fame there as "Gherardo delle Notte."

In the upper right of the Worcester picture appear the signature and date: "GHonthorst.f. 1622." The dry brush, the broad application of the paint and the bright colors closely resemble his other allegorical-genre paintings executed around 1622-24. The face with its prominent nose highlighted at the tip, the open mouth with the toothy smile, the small black pupils, pronounced eyelids and deep-set sockets, the pudgy face muscles, the forceful rendering of the foreshortened hand, the bare shoulder, the Burgundian-type theater costume, especially evident in the beret with feathers, and the placement of the figure in space so that he is to be seen from below are all characteristics of Honthorst's documented works dating from this period.<sup>2</sup>

Although Honthorst's Worcester painting finds its compositional source in the early works of Caravaggio such as the *Bacchino Malato*, Borghese Gallery, Rome, it has none of Caravaggio's seriousness.<sup>3</sup> Honthorst's painting is gay and outgoing, following the more earthy rendering of such subjects by Caravaggio's main pupil, Bartolomeo Manfredi.<sup>4</sup> This is most evident in the latter's *Bacchus and the Drinker*, Palazzo Barberini, Rome. Manfredi's Bacchus gaily squeezes the grapes into the glass of his drinking companion. It is the joyous, unrestrained quality of the Manfredi and not the sentimental, almost melancholic, atmosphere of the Caravaggio, that is taken up by Honthorst. Actually, one might even suggest that Honthorst combines the two Manfredi figures into one. Unfortunately, this connection with Manfredi cannot serve as an explanation for Honthorst's subject matter. Even though the image has long been entitled *Bacchus* or *Dionysos*,<sup>5</sup> a careful examination of the picture and a consideration of contemporary Dutch thought make it clear that this is not a figure from mythology.

The beret with the feathers, not the traditional vine leaves and grapes, and the costume showing the bared shoulder belong to the realm of entertainment and theater. This costume has been associated with the early sixteenth-century Burgundian theater and was used continually throughout Europe at that time.<sup>6</sup> However, it was the Italian followers of Caravaggio who first romanticized and developed the single-figured theater type in painting. This was taken up by the main artists in Utrecht: Terbrugghen, Honthorst and Baburen, who had become familiar with the type during their years in Italy. These Northerners painted numerous representations related to the theater and many were inspired by characters seen in traveling theatrical groups that toured the Netherlands and played in either local theaters or inns during the seventeenth century.<sup>7</sup> This connection with the world of the theater and entertainment is further substantiated by the way in which the Worcester figure is presented to the viewer. One looks up at him as though he were to be seen performing on a balcony or leaning out of a win-

*On the Cover: Gerrit van Honthorst, Dutch (1590-1656), THE TOPER, oil on canvas, 32¾ x 26¼ in. Accession number 1968.15. Museum purchase through the Charlotte E. W. Buffington Fund.*

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dow. This also occurs in Honthorst's 1624 Louvre *Concert* where the balcony is given in detail and also in Honthorst's single-figured allegorical scenes such as the 1623 *Merry Violinist*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, or the *Singing Elder*, Mecklenburgisches Landesmuseum, Schwerin, which have similar dimensions and might have been pendants. From this one might suggest that the Worcester painting not only was to be hung high on the wall to simulate the appearance of an actor but also that it might have been part of a series of paintings illustrating a moralistic theme. Unhappily, the known pictures by Honthorst with measurements similar to the Worcester painting and containing moralistic overtones either have companion pieces or simply do not relate to it compositionally. In spite of this, it is clear that Honthorst painted this canvas in conjunction with at least one other painting if not a series. The image can be associated with the *Five Senses*. This is substantiated by the presence of a similar figure squeezing grapes in Jan van Bijlert's single picture representing the *Five Senses*, Landesmuseum, Hannover. However, Bijlert's figure holds the grapes above his head and squeezes them so that the liquid runs into his open mouth while Honthorst's drinker fills a crock.

Even though Honthorst's figure does contain the attributes of the sense of *Taste*, it is unlikely that it was one of a series of five paintings representing the *Five Senses*. On several other occasions, he painted single figures using an imagery associated with such a subject, but these pictures were conceived as pendants<sup>8</sup> illustrating moralistic lessons. In the case of the 1624 Leningrad pair, there is a print of 1627 made after the *Merry Violinist Pointing to a Glass of Wine* which contains a verse by the Haarlem Latinist, Scriverius, warning the viewer of the evil effects brought on by too much wine.<sup>9</sup> Unhappily, it has not been possible to find either the pendant or a print made after the Worcester painting, but I would strongly suggest that it must have had a pendant and belongs to this tradition. Given the strong moralistic current in seventeenth-century Dutch art and the publication of emblem books containing numerous illustrations condemning excessive drinking, gaming and other worldly vices,<sup>10</sup> it is logical that artists would also paint such themes. The gay, relaxed smile of the Worcester actor and his unusual behavior strongly suggest an individual under the influence. How can one produce wine without fermentation? The irrationality of this act is made even more poignant by the prominence given to the action of the hand. The grapes are squeezed with such vigor that they bulge out from between the fingers. This is really the focal point of the picture and gives it its emblematic content. The meaning can be explained when one compares the Honthorst with Hendrick Terbrugghen's 1627 *Woman Squeezing Grapes into a Glass*, present whereabouts unknown.<sup>11</sup> Terbrugghen's composition includes an ape which has long been associated with drunkenness and is the symbol of the fool. The moral of the painting can therefore be seen as an illustration of the foolish actions of a drunkard.<sup>12</sup> Although Honthorst omits the ape, the attitude of his toper is so similar to Terbrugghen's that they both must illustrate the same message.

Worcester's new acquisition is a splendid example of the way in which Italian Caravaggism was adapted to a specifically northern type of moralistic-genre painting. The splendor of the paint imparts an animation and joyousness which not only attracts contemporary eyes but also attracted those of the seventeenth century and especially outside of Utrecht. It was certainly the directness and immediacy of such works as this by Gerrit van Honthorst that Frans Hals must have had in mind when he painted his moralistic-genre paintings in the late 1620's.<sup>13</sup>

J. Richard Judson  
Chairman, Art Department, Smith College

1. For documentation of the picture see J. Richard Judson, *Gerrit van Honthorst A Discussion of his Position in Dutch Art*, The Hague, 1959, p. 183, cat. rais. no. 75; and for the opinions of Honthorst as recorded by his contemporaries see *ibid.*, pp. 101f., 134 and *passim*.
2. See *ibid.*, cat. rais. nos. 162, 164, 168, 169, 170, 197 and *passim*.
3. For a discussion of Caravaggio's early works and their relationship to the lyrical Giorgionesque style see W. Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, Princeton, N.J., 1955, pp. 85, 146f., pl. 4.
4. For the importance of Manfredi and not Caravaggio for Honthorst see J. Richard Judson, *op. cit.*, pp. 42f., 56, 65f. and *passim*.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 183, cat. rais. no. 75.
6. For documentation see *ibid.*, p. 64f.
7. The first Italian groups had visited the Netherlands by 1619—S. J. Gudlaugsson, *Ikonographische Studien über die Holländische Malerei und das Theater des 17. Jahrhunderts*, Würzburg, 1938, p. 30.
8. See the 1624 *Merry Violinist Pointing to a Glass of Wine* and the *Female Lute Player*, both in the Hermitage, Leningrad. See J. Richard Judson, *op. cit.*, cat. rais. nos. 154, 162.
9. For details see *ibid.*, p. 66, note 2.
10. See for example Roemer Visscher, *Sinnepoppen*, Amsterdam, 1614, Part I, nos. IV, V; Part III, X, XI. For an English discussion of this see I. Bergström, *Dutch Still-Life Painting*, translated by C. Hedström & G. Taylor, London [1956], pp. 154–158 and for a detailed study see E. de Jongh, *Zinne-en minnebeelden in de schilderkunst van de zeventiende eeuw*, Nederlands en Belgisch kunstbezit uit openbare verzamelingen, 1967.
11. B. Nicolson, *Hendrick Terbrugghen*, London, 1958, p. 78, cat. rais. no. \*A 47, fig. 77.
12. For documentation see B. Nicolson, *loc. cit.*
13. Cf. Frans Hals, *Gluttony*, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam; *Vanitas (Boy with Skull)*, Collection Major Robert Proby Bt., Peterborough.

## SATURDAY GALLERY TOURS

1:30 p.m. from the Court. Conducted alternately by Richard C. Mühlberger and Mrs. J. David Farmer. Free to the public.

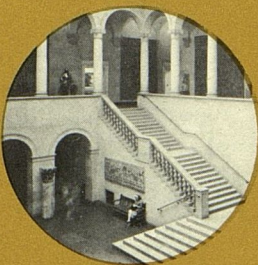
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|---------------|--|
| <b>FEB 15</b> | Architecture in the Museum                                   |
| <b>MAR 1</b>  | The Diversity of Media in Painting                           |
| <b>MAR 8</b>  | Sculpture in the Museum                                      |
| <b>MAR 15</b> | Portraits—Antiquity to Today                                 |
| <b>MAR 22</b> | Art of the Ancient World                                     |
| <b>MAR 29</b> | Decorative Arts  |
| <b>APR 5</b>  | Painting from the Renaissance to the Invention of the Camera |
| <b>APR 12</b> | Painting since the Invention of the Camera                   |



- FEB 2** *Sunday at 3 p.m.* Public Lecture (illustrated with slides): "The Great American Loneliness" by Daniel Catton Rich.
- FEB 8 and 9** *Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 p.m.* Public Film, *Carmen Jones*, fourth in the series, Grand Opera at the Museum. In color. 107 minutes.
- FEB 11** *Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.* Public Film: *Nothing but a Man* (1964), fourth in the series, Box Office Failures of the 1960's.
- FEB 15** *Saturday at 1:30 p.m.* Public Gallery Tour: "Architecture in the Museum" with Richard C. Mühlberger, Curator of Museum Education.
- FEB 16** *Sunday at 3 p.m.* Public Concert: The Adelaide Woodwind Quintet, Australia's most distinguished chamber music ensemble on international tour. Members of the Quintet are David Cubbin, flute, Jiri Tancibudek, oboe, Gabor Reeves, clarinet, Stanley Fry, French horn, and Thomas Wightman, bassoon. Their program will open with Hindemith's Chamber Music for Five Winds, Opus 24, No. 2 (1922), and includes Serenata Fugata for Wind Quintet by J. V. Peters, Wind Quintet by Claude Paul Taffanel, Quartet for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon by Jean Francaix, and Quintet in B flat major, Opus 56, No. 1 by Franz Danzi.
- FEB 20** *Thursday at 6:15 p.m.* Members' Supper Talk by John C. Johansen, New York architect who designed Clark University's Goddard Library, now nearing completion. Buffet supper at 6:15 p.m., program at 7:30 p.m. Supper reservations at \$2.00 are limited to the first one hundred received at the Information Desk. The lecture in the auditorium is open free to members.
- FEB 23** *Sunday at 3 p.m.* Public Organ Recital by Henry Hokans, Organist of All Saints Church and Museum Organist.

*Seating at all film programs is by numbered tag available at the main entrance one-half hour before each showing.*

**SPECIAL EXHIBITION** Art in America: Paintings, Drawings, Prints and Sculpture, 1830-1950, from the Collection of the Worcester Art Museum (January 9-February 23).



*New Gallery Tours*

"Architecture in the Museum" on Saturday, February 15, at 1:30 p.m. is the first in a new series of eight public gallery tours conducted by Richard C. Mühlberger and Mrs. J. David Farmer.

## ART IN AMERICA

1830 - 1950

*Paintings, Drawings, Prints and Sculpture  
from*

*the Collection of the Worcester Art Museum*

*Doorway to Illusion*, a newly acquired print by Arthur B. Davies, shown at right, is part of the Worcester Art Museum's winter exhibition of American art. More than 200 works from the permanent collection are arranged in ten galleries, with paintings and sculpture on the third and fourth floors of the museum, and prints and additional sculpture on the second floor. Of unusual artistic and historical interest, the exhibition includes splendid paintings by some of America's greatest artists and it represents a history of the museum's development through the tastes of different generations of directors and generous benefactors. Art in America, 1830-1950, opened on January 9 and will be on view through February 23. On Sunday, February 2, at 3 p.m. an illustrated lecture, "The Great American Loneliness," will be given by Daniel Catton Rich in conjunction with the exhibition.



Arthur B. Davies, American (1862-1928), *DOORWAY TO ILLUSION*, 3rd state, 1922, soft ground etching and aquatint, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 6 $\frac{5}{8}$  in. Accession number 1968.35. Museum purchase through the Thomas Hovey Gage Fund.

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM  
NEWS BULLETIN AND CALENDAR  
Issued monthly October-May. Second class  
postage paid at Worcester, Massachusetts

Volume XXXIV number 5

FEBRUARY 1969



55 Salisbury Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01608.

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP BEGINS AT EIGHT DOLLARS SINGLE, FIFTEEN DOLLARS DOUBLE (SEPTEMBER 1 THROUGH AUGUST 31). THE MEMBERSHIP OFFICE WILL GLADLY SEND FURTHER INFORMATION ON REQUEST.