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Acquisitions from the Pincus Fund

La Salle University Art Museum

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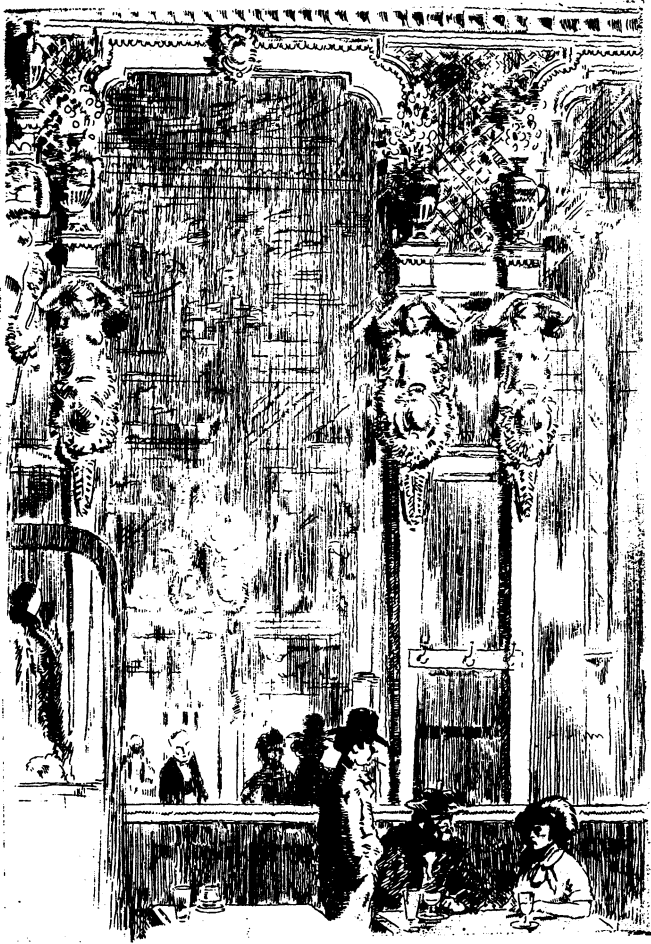
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ACQUISITIONS FROM
THE PINCUS FUND

Acquisitions from the Pincus Fund

In 1981, Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Pincus established a generous fund to enable the La Salle University Art Museum to acquire prints and drawings for its collection. The Marjorie M. and Irwin Nat Pincus Fund is a model for practical gifts to a small museum like ours, a fund that does not simply sustain the growth of a collection but provides for a continuing interaction between patrons and the museum staff. Specifically, the terms of the gift require that a small portion of the interest be reinvested in the fund, that the major portion every year or two be used for the purchase of a print or drawing--and that information about the extended purchase be provided to the donors.

The last very modest requirement has been a serendipity for us. Marjorie, like her late husband Nat, has been very active in the arts and museum scene of the East coast for decades. Thus, she brings, not only wide experience and excellent taste to her involvement in several established institutions, especially the Rosenbach Library, but also a sympathetic interest in the development of younger programs like our own. She has supported us financially but has also given

generously of her wisdom, encouragement, and enthusiasm. We are much in her debt.

The acquisitions presented here and made possible by the Pincus Fund represent different national backgrounds, periods, and styles. As is evident, however, there has been some concentration of late 19th and early 20th century British etchers and drypoint artists. The chief influence on them was James Whistler's, and their work did much to revive interest in the etching medium.



1. Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), German

Joachim and the Angel c. 1504
from *The Life of the Virgin Series* (1500-1511)

Woodcut 84-G-1287

Dürer was a master painter, printmaker, draftsman, watercolorist, and author of treatises on artistic theory. It is through his woodcuts and engravings that one is able to trace the transition in the graphic arts from a late Gothic to a thoroughly Renaissance style.

The image in this print is of the moment when Joachim, while tending his flock, is visited by the Angel Gabriel, who announces that Joachim's marriage to St. Anne would finally be blessed with a child, the future mother of Jesus. The story appears in apocryphal New Testament literature and later in the thirteenth century *Golden Legend*, a book much used by late medieval and early Renaissance artists.

2. Charles Meryon (1821-1868), French

Le Ministère de La Marine 1865

state: vi/vi

Etching 84-G-1259

(Printed by Auguste De Lâtré, published by Cadart and Luquet in 1866)

Meryon was an imaginative and influential graphic artist known especially for his haunting and wistful etchings of Paris. These works reflect the romantic spirit of his time but also suggest the mental illness

which afflicted him throughout his life. While his architectural rendition of the Parisian buildings and other structures are considered rather accurate, their atmosphere is Gothic and foreboding, sometimes even fantastical or surreal. This print was the last of twenty-two from his Parisian suite and may have been influenced by Meryon's experience in naval school and his voyages in his early life. In any case, the scene remains mysterious, and most likely that was the artist's intention.

3. James A. McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), American

The Forge 1861

state: iv/iv

Drypoint

95-G-3169

Whistler was one of the most influential American expatriate artists in the nineteenth century. He has recently been referred to as the greatest etcher since Rembrandt. In his etchings and drypoints, Whistler relied on subtle gradations of tone to softly focus his figures and forms. His masterful manipulation of lights and darks gave a sketchy but poetic definition to his forms and set his images in a veiled atmosphere. It was a style which impressed many later English printmakers, several of whom are represented in this exhibition. Although industrial images were frequently used by Whistler, especially in scenes of Liverpool, London, and Venice, this subject matter was still fairly novel for Victorian times. This image was sketched at Perros-Guirec in Brittany, where Whistler spent the summer in 1861. The sketch was later used for a drypoint print and was included in the "Thames Set" published in 1871.

unidealized nude figures seen close up and in an interior space as exemplified here. Working directly from the model, he depicted the figure in a relaxed pose, with dispassionate objectivity. Pearlstein's interest is solely with the physical existence of the nude and the formal elements used to define the forms: pattern, light, shadow, line, radical angles and, often, somewhat abstract spatial relationships.

9. Odilon Redon (1840-1916), French

Oannès, moi, la première conscience du chaos j'ai surgi de l'abîme pour durcir la matière, pour régler les formes

("Oannès, I, the first consciousness of chaos, arose from the abyss to harden matter, to regulate forms")

Lithograph

84-G-1259

Plate XIV - illustration from the 3rd series: *Tentation de Saint Antoine* by Gustave Flaubert (Paris: Published by Vollard, 1896)

The expressive range and tonal richness of Redon's black and white drawings and lithographs is probably unequalled among twentieth century artists. Inspired by Jung's psychological theory of the collective unconscious and the ideas of Baudelaire, Poe and Flaubert, Redon dwelt in a world of fantasies and reveries that was usually reflected in his artistic output. He placed, he said, "the logic of the visible world at the service of the invisible world." This lithograph does not illustrate Flaubert's text but rather evokes a general mood or spirit associated with the text. The connection, as in most of Redon's art, remains ambiguous and mysterious.

10. Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940), French

L'oeuvre Rosmersholm Oct. 1893

Lithograph

89-G-3051

The design for the program which appears on the right was done for the Théâtre de L'oeuvre, Paris in 1893. It was the first of numerous programs which Vuillard, along with Bonnard, Lautrec, Denis, and Steinlen, illustrated. Vuillard also painted stage sets for this theater, most notably for plays by Ibsen and Strindberg.

11. *Le Square Vintimille* 1937

state: iv/iv

Etching

88-G-2990

Dissatisfied with the traditional academic style, Vuillard and Bonnard joined a newly formed artistic group in 1889 known as the "Nabis." In their works objects were suggested rather than described through the use of flat patterns of color and shapes within a flattened space. However, this sketchy rendition of a city square in spring, with its ephemeral light filtering through the feathery trees, evokes an impressionist ambiance and is uncharacteristic of much of Vuillard's work. The print offers a view of the square from the balcony of his apartment in Paris; he etched it three years before he died. He had painted this view from different points on the balcony numerous times before, most notably in 1907-08 in two murals now in the collection of the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

12. Frederick Carter (1885-1967), English

*Augustus John and William Nicholson at the
Café Royal* c. 1920

Etching

91-G-3084

Carter's belief in pagan mysticism informed much of his graphic work in both style and content. This print is, therefore, uncharacteristic of much of his oeuvre, but he was able to manipulate the graphic medium to suit the subject in hand and, thus, work in a more traditional manner. Heretofore, Carter's prints were quite rare, but, with the recent discovery of his own private collection, he will hopefully gain the recognition he well deserves.

The painter Augustus John (1878-1961) did portraits of major writers of the period including Yeats and Joyce. His quirky personality seems to be reflected in bohemian characters like Struthers in Lawrence's *Aaron's Rod* and Gulley Jimson in Cary's *The Horse's Mouth*. Sir William Nicholson (1872-1949) earned a respectable reputation for his landscapes, still lifes and portraits, but was also the father of Ben Nicholson, one of the major figures in 20th century abstract painting.

The Café Royal, at 68 Regent Street, London, was a favorite haunt of literary and visual artists after the 1880s and was frequented by Whistler, Wilde, Beerbohm, Shaw and others. Others besides Carter, especially Beardsley, Sickert painted and sketched the Café.

Caroline Wister
Curator