HAMILTON EASTER FIELD
ART FOUNDATION

COLLECTION OF
PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE

Self Portrait—By Hamilton Easter Field
not in M.C. Kahn

Sponsored by the
COLLEGE ART ASSOCIATION

Exhibition at Art Institute Dec. 14, 1934—Jan. 20, 1935
HAMiLTON EaSTER FiELD ART FOUNDATION

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*(died September, 1954)
FOREWORD

If Hamilton Easter Field had himself been asked what form of memorial to him would be most pleasing, there is no doubt that he would have replied, the creative work of some fine artists. But he might have gone on to add that his most profound and far-reaching memorial has been existing for many years—in the very fibre and essence of such created works. His influence as a fellow-artist on the young people of genius and talent whom he attracted about him, as a penetrating and relentless critic, as a patient teacher with flashes of insight into the early workings of an artist's functioning—come well into Walter Pater's designation of being, as a living person, practically infinite.

Hamilton Easter Field was born into an influential Quaker family and spent his early days in the quiet, self-contained section of Brooklyn Heights made famous by Ernest Poole's "The Harbot." His family belonged to that rebellious aristocratic group who formed part of the old Underground-railway of Abolitionist days, and included such names as Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor. His mother was a member of the Haviland family; it was one of his uncles who gave Renoir his notorious job as painter on porcelain in the famous Haviland china manufacture at Limoges. Even his early education consisted largely in travel abroad, the acquirement of several languages fluently spoken, an intense study of the arts. He studied painting with several painters in Paris of inferior stamp, but his most important influences were probably Bonnard and Matisse. As a painter Field leaned towards impressionism, though he laid great emphasis on solidity and had a precise, caressing feeling for tactile values. The reason he did not attain to greater fame as a painter was perhaps due to that very restlessness of energy and wide versatility of interests that led to his extensive nurturing of other talents.

His collecting was done, as were most of Field's diverse activities, with an exuberant passion and a deep appreciation for essentials. He was one of the first collectors of Japanese prints in this country. His Chinese stone-prints were notable. And his connoisseurship of early Chinese painting was not only impressive in itself but was likewise one of the formative influences on contemporary American taste in art. He went in for primitive African carvings at an early date, but above all, he encouraged, fostered, bought the works of the contemporary modern artists who, he felt, displayed some talent. His curiosity about all things aesthetic carried him into a multifariousness of interest, even a rather serious devotion to music which led to his singing at the Metropolitan Opera House with Caruso! (as a member of the chorus.)

Field's art school up in Maine was the outcome rather of his desire to assemble important artists around him, and of his inordinate fondness for building. Down in the little fishing-village of Perkins Cove, he made studios out of parts of old barns which he picked up any and everywhere. He saw to it that they conformed with the fine simplicity of the fishermen's huts both in lovely gray tone and good proportionings, for he revered the nobility and grandeur which he felt was innate in these Maine natives. In the building of those studios, he delighted to show his contempt for the professional architect's blueprint-slavery by directing the lay-out himself, on the spot, trusting his eye rather than the ruler, practically never taking measurements. "Our grand-parents," he wrote in his magazine, "had an instinct for beauty far beyond that which we have today. Their houses were suited to the
soil as ours are not. They would not have chosen a French architect to design Harvard, as was done in the case of the buildings of the University of California. The style, in each of the thirteen commonwealths, was suited to the particular, local landscape.” So profound was his veneration for the purity of taste of the early new Englanders that he rescued many excellent pieces of furniture and rugs from desuetude and oblivion, and started the early-American fad in several quarters.

As a critic, Field knew the gentle art of making enemies when he wished it. His polemic mind could come out in caustic diatribes, on occasion, against even a powerful dealer when he felt the man was in error—the exposure of the Renoir fakes is history. Field was the art-editor for Arts and Decoration, and for the Brooklyn Daily Eagle for many years, before he founded The Arts magazine in 1919. This was started as a magazine devoted not only to art, but to music and the drama as well. It was the only periodical of the time that was intensely interested in the new movement and in modern trends in the arts. It was a courageous venture and as soon as Field received advertisements, he promptly put the money back into the magazine to expand its sphere of influence and make it of increasing importance.

In 1922 Hamilton Easter Field founded the Salons of America, just two weeks before his death. He died suddenly of pneumonia, having expended all his reserves of health on the founding of that organization. He selected the directors and was undoubtedly the moving spirit back of their very important and challenging exhibition the following year, an exhibition indicating that it is the artist, rather than the decorator, who is first to perceive the value of truly modern elements in decoration, especially as evidenced in objects created in an industrial world without taking conscious thought of their aesthetic qualities. Models of American racing yachts and Crane steel-valves were included, to show the innate purity of form in anything well-designed for practical use. His enthusiasm for talent, from whatever side it might pour in, was unbounded. His studio was a center for much that was alive in the art world. His encouragement, help—in many cases financial—and his sponsorship, went out to an overwhelming list: Biddle, Brook, Bouché, Brachard, Cunin, Cunard, Carroll, Dasburg, Demuth, Dickinson, Faggi, Friedman, Gaynor, Halpert, Hart, Hartley, Hartman, Hirsch, Karolik, Kroll, Kelly, Adelaide Lawson, Lachaise, Laurent, Marin, McFee, Miller, Morrison, O'Keefe, Pascin, Sheeler, Schmidt, Stettheimer, Stella, Sterne, Speicher, Weber, Walkowitz, Wright, Wiltz, Yarrow, “painters of true American lineage” as well as names that might not be the “scions of our colonial aristocracy.” Field, himself unassailably American, could afford to concern himself only with the quality of their art. But even Thomas Craven would be rejoiced to hear that this Foundation, following in the way indicated by Field, threatens to fulfill the hope with which he concludes his book: that it would be a fine thing “if we had in America a dominant idealism, a spiritual force uniting artists in a common purpose, making them practitioners again, affording them legitimate markets, and circulating their pictures.”

The Hamilton Easter Field Foundation is in every way, an artists' organization. The pictures have been purchased entirely through their efforts. There is an annual auction to which some thirty or forty artists contribute. Half the proceeds go to the Foundation for the buying of works of art. It is the artists, too, who have made the selections and the emphasis on quality in the choice of them has been as rigorously insisted upon as in the making of their own created works. It is probably inevitably right that the artist do his own choosing, for if he be such at all, his very function depends upon unending processes of preference. The psychologists tell us that art is very like religion, that they are both affairs of deep emotional feeling; if that is so then it is fortunately a religion without the danger
of having any high-priest. Rebellion is the essence of art. Each artist must find for himself those forms into which to pour his spirit and emotion. He must seek uncompromisingly for the shape that will fit his time and himself. So much the better if he can exercise this rare judgment toward the helping of his fellow-artist.

If Field felt with Ruskin that there is only one way of getting good art, by enjoying it, the Foundation named him has had that principle in mind. "Good art has only been produced by nations who rejoiced in it; who fed themselves with it, as if it were bread; shouted at the sight of it; fought for it; starved for it." The artists have enjoyed the assembling of this group of paintings. Only rarely has the matter of need entered into the decision, and even there the first claim of quality had rigidly to be enforced. There is no setting up of arbitrary standards intended by a collection such as this—artists are not much good when it comes to creating ranks of castes. You are invited simply to enjoy.

ELSA ROGO

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<td>Peggy Bacon</td>
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STUART DAVIS

DUNCAN FERGUSON

ARNOLD FRIEDMAN
Born in New York City in 1879. Studied at the Art Students League with Henri and in Paris. Represented at the Newark Museum and many private collections.

EMIL GANSO

WOOD GALLOW
Born in Stamford, Connecticut, in October 1886. Studied at the National Academy of Design and with Walt Kuhn at Fort Lee, New Jersey, President of Salons of America, and Vice-President of the Hamilton Easter Field Art Foundation.
CHAIM GROSS

47. Mão de carvão

STEIN HIRSCH

35. Deserted Farm

SAMUEL HALPERT

39. Still Life

BERNARD KARFIOL

20. Nude

WALT KUHN

21. Nell

YASUO KUNIYOSHI

22. The Captain's Daughter

ROBERT LAURENT
Born in Brittany in 1890. Studied with Hamilton Easter Field and Maurice Sterne. Later he attended the British Academy of Rome, and was a pupil of Guiseppe Fontori. Represented at the Art Institute of Chicago, Newark Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Corcoran, Mun PURE, and Whitney Museum of American Art, Barnes Foundation, Radio City Music Hall. Is instructor at the Ogunquit School of Art, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, and the Art Students League.

23. Reclining Figure (wood carving)

ADELAIDE LAWSON
Born in New York, New York, 1890. Studied at the Art Students League under Kenneth Hayes Miller. Member of Salons of America, New York Society of Women Artists, Brooklyn Society of Modern Artists.

24. Hempstead Harbor

GASTON LONGCHAMP
Born in Paris in 1894. Studied at the Beaux Arts Academy in Paris, and then with the Fauves. Represented in many well-known private collections in Europe and America.

25. Negro Musicians

GUS MAGER
Born in Newark, October 1878. Member of the Modern Academy of Art and Salons of America. Represented in the Whitney Museum of American Art and many private collections.

26. Painting

DANIEL MORRISON

27. Siberian Wrestler (by Gus Mager)

1. Reclining figure (by Cassius Morrison)
REUBEN NAKIAN
(see note on p. 3)
Head of Longchamp (plaster)
ELIZABETH A. ROE

JULES PASCIN
29. The Party
BROADMOOR ART GALLERIES
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

KATHERINE SCHMIDT
26. Caught in the Waterfall

JUDSON SMITH
9. Landscape

NILES SPENCER
2. Still Life

MAURICE STERN
15. Figures, Bali

HENRY STRATER
22. Nubble Lighthouse, Maine

CHUZO TAMOTSU
55. Backyard


Born in Widhr, Bulgaria, in 1885. Was self-taught, supplemented by extensive travel all through Europe. Represented in Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Gallery of Living Art, New York, Detroit Institute of Arts, Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts.

Born in Xenia, Ohio, August 15, 1886. Studied with Kenneth Hayes Miller, Member of the Salons of America and Brooklyn Society of Modern Artists.


Born in Louisville in 1896. Studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts under Charles Grafly, Hamilton Easter Field, Vuillard, Maurice Denis. He also attended the Art Students League, and studied in Madrid, Paris and Florence.

Born in Kanazawa, Japan, in 1891. Studied in Japan and in Europe. Represented in many private collections.