ART OF THE UNITED NATIONS
THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

ART OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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TO THE VISITOR: Art of the United Nations is a new kind of exhibition. It brings together thirty-seven objects of art, one from each of the United Nations.

It is first and foremost a showing of art. Within the limitations of a world at war, it presents a group of paintings, sculpture, prints, and decorative arts, chosen for their aesthetic qualities.

Each object has been selected with intense care by the Staff of the Art Institute after months of research and comparison. While assembling the exhibit we have sought advice and information from specialists and governments, but the final choice in every case has been made by the Museum Staff.

We have not limited the selection to any one period or civilization or style or medium in the nation’s growth. The oldest work on exhibition was made in 2200 B.C.; the latest, in 1943.

Art of the United Nations is not a political exhibition. It suggests nothing beyond the fact that every people make art, and that when art is good other people like to see it.

Neither is it a war exhibition. No object, even those by contemporaries, treats of the present struggle.
It is not educational in the sense that you are invited to read this art in terms of history, philosophy, religion, or geographic boundaries.

No mere collection of objects, no matter how vast, can tell the entire story of centuries of world civilization. Despite immediate visual appeal and inherent content, art is only one means of human understanding.

To combine thirty-seven objects of such diversity is a major exhibition problem. The Art Institute invited the distinguished designer, Gyorgy Kepes, to create a special installation for Art of the United Nations, at once contemporary in means and sympathetic in spirit to each work displayed.

The catalogue has been edited by Frederick A. Sweet; the research and catalogue entries, other than those individually signed, are the work of Florence Hope.

Such an exhibition can widen our aesthetic horizons and increase our pleasure in art. If it accomplishes these things, the Art Institute will consider it a success.

DANIEL CATTON RICH
ART OF THE UNITED NATIONS
AUSTRALIA

TOM ROBERTS (1856–1931)
Bailed Up; begun 1895, finished 1927

Oil on canvas, 51¼ x 71¼ inches

Lent by The National Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; through The Museum of Modern Art, New York

The continent of Australia, settled late in the eighteenth century, did not achieve a school of native landscape art until Tom Roberts, in the late 'eighties, led the Victorian parlor painters out of doors. Finding a witchery in the bush country, he escaped from Melbourne's city streets into the wilderness and started a camp where all his artist friends soon flocked to spend their weekends painting with him. They were under the spell of Impressionism, but under Tom Roberts' leadership they began to sense and express in their works his same love of Australia's "beauty and her terror, the wide brown land." It was during this period that art in Australia began to emerge as a contributing factor in the country.

Bailed Up was done with a scrupulous regard for realism. Friends of the artist obtained an old mail coach and driver, victim of several holdups, and posed in the broiling sun while Roberts painted the scene from a platform built in a tree twelve feet above the road. The result—one of the most popular of all Australian paintings—may be compared with Frederick Remington's romantic documentation of our own Wild West.
BELGIUM

PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER (1525/30–1569)
The Wedding Dance, 1566
Oil on wood panel, 47 x 62 inches
Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts

Flemish painting is distinguished by realism of subject, vivid drawing, bright enduring color, and a tremendous zest for life. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, the most famous sixteenth century painter of the country which is today Belgium, rejected the formal Italian influence of his period to concentrate on landscape and peasant themes. Shrewd, inventive, and bitingly humorous, he was one of the first democrats in art, preferring humble man to court portraits and mythological subjects. At the same time, he continued the Northern Gothic tradition to become one of the greatest designers in the history of art, blending superb decoration with fantasy and earthy poetry.

This brilliant painting gives a heart-warming expression to all the happiness, joviality, and natural good humor that human beings, no matter what their class, must feel. It is interesting to note that Bruegel painted this outstandingly gay scene of a wedding in 1566, the year the cruel Spanish Duke of Alva entered the Lowlands with troops to terrorize a subjected people.
BOLIVIA

HEAD OF MAN
Stone, 5 inches high
Tiahuanaco culture, classic period, 500-700 A.D.
Lent by Mr. Albert Gallatin, New York

The Americas may take pride in their rich heritage of pre-Columbian art, yet, generally, little is known about it. Its period extends from pre-historic times until Columbus’ discovery of America. Examples are found in areas from Mexico to Chile. Although its origins are much in dispute, no one doubts that the people who created this art were of Asiatic origin and migrated across the Bering Straits; this accounts for the occasional Mongolid looks on the sculptures. The names of artists are not recorded, for the individual was sublimated by the work of art which he created. As for tools, these pre-Columbian artists used stone or wooden hammers, chisels, and axes, metal being practically unknown, except for gold. Many ruins exist to tell us of the different cultures.

This stone head is an example of Tiahuanaco culture. Tiahuanaco was a mountain city built in what is now Bolivia near Lake Titicaca, highest in the world. Very little is known about it, except that the cultural period this city embraced was influenced by the coastal Chimu culture and was followed by the powerful Inca Empire. Conventional design, square-cutting, vigorous yet sensitive facial expression set this head apart as typically Tiahuanaco.
BRAZIL

CANDIDO PORTINARI (1903– )

Morro, 1933

Oil on canvas, 44½ x 57½ inches

Lent by The Museum of Modern Art (The Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Purchase Fund), New York

Discovered in 1503 by the Portuguese, Brazil had little indigenous culture. The Indians living there were an untutored race, yet by the seventeenth century, led by their conquerors, they had developed a style of architecture which had its full flowering in the next century in rich, luxuriant, and elaborate edifices that still beautify Brazil’s cities. But, as in other South American states, nineteenth century Brazilian artists paid too much attention to French influences and lost their original vigor of expression.

It was not until about twenty years ago that Candido Portinari, impressed by Diego Rivera’s revolution against European dominance over the arts, led his fellow artists from the Paris School back to their native Brazil. Now he has become the foremost interpreter of his country; in this firmly balanced, colorful painting of a promontory, he gives an admirable picture of indigenous life in Brazil.
CANADA

TOM THOMSON (1877–1917)
West Wind, 1916–1917
Oil on canvas, 47 3/4 x 54 inches
Lent by The Art Gallery of Toronto

Until recently, Canada had but few examples of native art, for her artists were not only trained in Europe but, for the most part, spent all their lives there. Wood-carvers and architects of no mean ability had worked in Quebec, and Canada may boast of her primitive, Paul Kane, who painted Indians and wild landscapes, and Cornelius Krieghoff, her German-born equivalent of our own Currier and Ives.

But a strong and truly native Canadian school was not started until 1910 when the Group of Seven, of whom Thomson was one, originated. They broke from European tradition; going out into the wilderness, these men painted freshly the rugged scenery of Canada and interpreted with feeling its own savage, frigid beauty.
CHINA
CHINA (see illustration on preceding page)

STYLE OF HSIA KUEI (twelfth century)
A Fisherman's Abode after the Rain
Ink and slight color on silk; 56\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 39\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches
Lent by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

In China, artists worked directly for the tiny percentage of educated people, themselves keen critics and deft users of the brush, who were able to impose their culture upon a great nation, for appreciation of beauty in literature, music, and the graphic arts was considered essential to education. Landscape paintings are known to the Chinese as “mountain-water pictures.” Because all Chinese gentlemen and scholars looked forward to retiring to some distant mountain fastness, away from the cares of the world, to compose poetry, discourse philosophically with a few friends, and contemplate the distant peaks, we can understand what brought these wonderful pictures into being, no more fantastic in form than the very mountains which inspired them.

In this great landscape, which embodies a love of solitude and space, the returning fisherman is an unimportant incident, for Buddhists thought man of no more consequence than any other of nature’s phenomena. It is a product of the Sung dynasty (960–1279), a famous age of cultural revival in China, similar to the Renaissance in Italy. Although great landscape painting was undoubtedly established in earlier epochs, it attained its greatest prestige at this time.

CHARLES FARRENS KELLEY

GREGORIO VASQUEZ DE ARCE Y CEBALLOS
(1638–1711)
The Adoration of the Shepherds
Oil on canvas, 32\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 25\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches
Lent by the Museo de Arte Colonial, Bogotá, Colombia

Named for Columbus, although ironically the great discoverer never set foot on its shores, this mountainous country, seven times as large as New England, may boast of a veritable Athens in Latin America. Bogotá, its beautiful inland city, has long been a cultural center for the scholars, poets, and writers not only of Colombia, but of all South America. Its art, like the spoken language, is a pure reflection of Spain, yet severity and simplicity have been the keynotes, rather than Baroque elaboration. The painters in Bogotá, of whom Gregorio Vasquez was perhaps the most talented, formed a vivacious school which rivaled those of Cuzco, Quito, and Mexico. Vasquez’ work gains all the more charm and appeal when it is realized that he had little or no tradition of painting from which to draw inspiration; his only knowledge of other painters stemmed from a few engravings and poor copies brought over from the old country.

COLOMBIA
COSTA RICA

FIGURE OF MAN (1200-1400 A.D.)
Lava Stone, 59 inches high
Guaté culture
From Eastern Highlands of Costa Rica
Lent by The American Museum of Natural History, New York

Costa Rica, literally rich coast, so named because of the gold and the luxuriant animal and plant life, was discovered by Columbus on his fourth and last trip to America. It was inhabited at the time by the Guetars, an agricultural people well advanced in the arts of pottery, stone-carving, and gold work, although hampered by their primitive stone and wooden tools. The three volcanic ranges which run across the country have supplied the native stone-carvers with a malleable, porous material such as this of which the stone figure is made. His elaborate headdress, made of two animals resembling a snake and a crocodile which latter was a popular motive in Central American art, is typical rather of Nicaraguan than Costa Rican art. The face is dramatic in its sharply defined, severe modeling.
CUBA

AMELIA PELÁEZ (1897– )
Fishes, 1943
Oil on canvas, 45\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 35\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches
Lent by The Museum of Modern Art (Inter-American Fund), New York

It was on this colorful island that Columbus landed in 1492. Little pre-Columbian art existed here before the Spaniards colonized the island, so that there was no natural talent from which to draw material for artistic development. A culture arose from the mixture of Cubans and Africans, imported by the Spaniards’ slave trade; this Afro-Cuban culture, now an inspiration for many Cuban painters, became manifest in religious dance ceremonies and voodoo. As in other Latin American countries, the Academy in Havana was a stuffy training center for neo-classic imitators. The second decade of this century broadened the horizon of art in Cuba; artists went abroad, like Miss Peláez, for study in Paris. Her work shows the combined influence, as does that of most Cuban painters, of the School of Paris and the hot, jarring color of Cuba itself.
CZECHOSLOVAKIA

OSKAR KOKOSCHKA (1886–1918)
Thomas G. Masaryk, First President of Czechoslovakia, 1936

Oil on canvas, 38 3/4 x 51 3/4 inches
Lent by the artist, London, England; through Feigli Gallery, New York

This might be called the portrait of a realist by an idealist. Thomas G. Masaryk (president from 1918 to 1935) began his career as a scholar and critic who revolted against Victorian heroic-romantics and helped establish a new era of social consciousness. Turning from literature to politics, he worked insistently for the liberation of his country from the centuries' old Hapsburg tyranny. Caught outside the Austro-German Empire during the first World War, Masaryk continued his country's struggle for freedom in Paris, London, and Washington. This was finally achieved on October 28, 1918. Kokoschka portrays him in the presidential office at the Hradčín Castle against a view of Prague, their beloved city. Of Austrian origin, the idealistic Kokoschka left his country and became a naturalized Czech as a protest against the refusal of his paintings as degenerate art in German museums and against the exclusion of Käthe Kollwitz and others from the Prussian Academy.
DENMARK

THE RIGHT OF NATIONALITY, 1780

Copenhagen porcelain group in polychrome
Height, 9 inches. Base, 7½ x 5½ inches
Lent by Mr. Jack Linsky, Kew Gardens, Long Island,
New York

Danish ceramics have held a place of honor in the field since the founding of the first factory in 1722. The earliest ware was of opaque glazed pottery decorated in blue on a white ground. Later, following the discovery of kaolin deposits on Bornholm, the manufacture of true porcelain was undertaken. The Royal Porcelain factory, founded in 1775, has continued in operation to the present. Though artistically the highest accomplishment of the Copenhagen factory in its early phases seems to be in its "useful" wares, a large number of figurines and groups were produced between 1777 and approximately 1800. For the most part, these bear a decided "folk" or local touch in comparison with the more sophisticated and finished work of other Continental factories. The present example is a case in point, for it demonstrates the national temper and character, both in its subject and in its forthright approach.

This group was modeled after a medal made by Adzer in 1776 to commemorate the recognition of the rights of nationality in Denmark. Three children representing Denmark, Norway, and the Dukedoms of Slesvig and Holstein are shown linking hands with a female figure, symbol of Piety.

MEYRIG R. ROGERS
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL OF THE CATHEDRAL
AT TRUJILLO CITY, 1514-1540

Photograph, lent by the Embassy of the Dominican Republic, Washington, D.C.

Santo Domingo, now called Trujillo City in honor of President Trujillo who rebuilt it after the disastrous hurricane of 1930, was for half a century the greatest city in the New World; famous sixteenth century explorers used it as a base of operations. During this period, the Cathedral was erected. The story has it that Columbus’ bones, brought back from Spain by his daughter-in-law, are buried here. Essentially medieval on the interior, with its heavy piers, pointed arches, and Gothic vaults, it reflects on the façade the restrained qualities of the Plataresque style, or Spanish Renaissance.
EL SALVADOR

MAYOID PAINTED VASE
WITH BAT DECORATION (700–900 A.D.)
Baked clay; height 7½ inches, diameter 7 inches
Mayan culture, Tepeu phase
From El Cocal, San Jacinto, El Salvador
Lent by The American Museum of Natural History, New York

The smallest American republic, El Salvador, can vaunt possession of some of the largest and most numerous volcanic mountains in the western hemisphere. Izalco, the pride of San Salvador, evolved in a hundred years from a hole in the ground shooting mud and smoke to a mile high mountain erupting daily. The lava-enriched soil has made the wealth of the country, for all plants, especially the coffee bean, grow luxuriantly here. In pre-Columbian times, El Salvador was an outlying post of the Mayan Empire. The sculpture that has been found here is insignificant in comparison to the powerful work of Copan artists. But the natives excelled in pottery, a medium which offered greater freedom of expression to the craftsman since it did not come under the dictates of the all-powerful priests. The Mayans are famous for this pottery which has a high aesthetic appeal because of the rich variety of shapes used and the abundance of beautifully coordinated decorative motifs.
ETHIOPIA

CODEX OF THE GOSPELS, 1401
Made for Princess Zir-Ganele
Illustrated are St. Mark (left) and the Transfiguration (right)
Lent by Mr. Gregor Aharon, New York

The remote uplands of Abyssinia have supported a mixed population whose common culture has been conservative and unoriginal. Anciently the Ethiopians derived their civilization and religion from the Egyptians. Their Christianity was Coptic in derivation. In the fifth century Syrian monasticism became inordinately influential among them. From that century to our own, Abyssinian monks and priests have been the most numerous group in the country who could be regarded as at all learned or cultured. Correspondingly, Abyssinian art has been mainly ecclesiastical or liturgical in function and Christian-Hebrew in theme. Other late antique influences were Arabian infusions from Yemen, Jewish transfers from Palestine, and even proto-Byzantine increments from Constantinople.

Typically Abyssinian of the late medieval period is the Zir-Ganele Codex of the Gospels. It is profusely illuminated with canon arcades, gospel tableaux, and author portraits. These paintings are high-keyed in color, melodramatic in statement, and barbaric in manner.

HAROLD R. WILLOUGHBY, Professor of Christian Origins at the University of Chicago
FRANCE

GEORGES SEURAT (1859–1891)
Sunday Afternoon on Grande Jatte Island, 1886

Oil on canvas, 81 x 120¾ inches

The Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago

It has been said that during the nineteenth century, French art reached its highest point, for then all the best French elements met and found their culmination. To many people, then, this century presents a cross-section of the best there is in French art. Classical order, objective realism, exquisite light and color, penetrating vision, the precisely balanced fusion of logic and feeling and intellect—all these qualities are variously expressed by different nineteenth century masters. Seurat, a link in the long line of great artists who draw from the past (in his case, Poussin, Delacroix, Ingres) and contribute their own genius to make the heritage of the future, expresses in his work the best of French traditions: order, restraint, logic, balance, thought, emotion.

This magnificent composition, on which Seurat labored during two years and for which he made over seventy preparatory sketches and drawings, shows a carefree Sunday crowd of Parisian bourgeois as they stroll on the island of the Grande Jatte in the Seine. It is the essence of a period not only in subject, but in spirit.
GREAT BRITAIN
and NORTHERN IRELAND

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER
(1775–1851)

Peace—Burial at Sea (of Sir David Wilkie), 1842
Oil on canvas, 32¼ x 32¼ inches
Lent by The National Gallery, Millbank (Tate Gallery), London; through The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

The popular conception of our British ally’s country as a drab land of rain and fog is upset by Turner’s glowing canvases. He paints England in brilliant or tender color, pulsating with life and air. Turner is the father of modern landscape and Impressionism not only in his palette, but in believing “my business is to draw what I see: not what I know is there.”

This painting was done to commemorate the death of Sir David Wilkie, a genre painter; he died while returning from Turkey and was buried at sea off Gibraltar.
GREECE

HORSEMAN RELIEF (late fourth century B.C.)
Marble; height 1 1/4 feet, width 1 foot
Probably from Rhodes
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

It might well be said of all the Occidental countries’ relations to Greece that “never have so many owed so much to so few.” There is hardly an element in our present culture that does not derive ultimately from the Greeks — in art, medicine, geometry, grammar, philosophy, government, education. And yet more than anything, perhaps, we owe them a debt for inspiring a love of knowledge, wisdom, and, above all else, freedom.

The glory that was Greece rose and declined over a period stretching between the seventh and the first centuries B.C. Her art, which is the matrix of all modern art, shows a continual striving towards perfection of form. Carved with consummate skill, this sculpture reveals the Greek ideal of beauty in its sensitive modeling, in its elimination of details, in its just proportions, and in its inherent dignity.
GUATEMALA

WOMAN'S COSTUME (contemporary)
From Quetzaltenango
Lent by Miss Florence Dibell Bartlett, Chicago

The Indians of Guatemala, descendants of the Mayans, comprise more than half the population of that Central American country. Except in villages near large cities where the Spanish influence has been strong, the highland natives have clung tenaciously to the habits of their ancestors and carried on the arts and crafts handed down through generations.

One form of art expression for which they have become famous is the production of cloth in the primitive manner of their forefathers. Made for personal use and adornment, the great charm of these fabrics lies in the harmonious blending of bright colors, originality of design, variety of technique.

Each Indian village has its own distinctive apparel, as well as language and tribal customs, and this costume is characteristic of Quetzaltenango where women are noted for their beauty and colorful dress.

Mildred Davison
HAITI

R. VINCENT
Cockfight, 1940
Oil on canvas, 18 x 26 inches
Anonymous loan

Haiti, from an aboriginal word meaning mountainous country, is the western third of the island on which the Dominican Republic is situated. It was the world's first Negro republic, and it is the only independent nation in the western hemisphere that is French in heritage, for in 1697 Spain ceded that territory to France. The natives were dying at such a prodigious rate that the new colonizers found the importation of African slaves imperative, and, as a result, elements of an African culture were introduced in the everyday life of the island.

The art of Haiti was untouched by any native traditions and kept a remarkably French flavor in spite of its exotic milieu; for instance, the typical pitched roof of France was used instead of the flat one, more convenient for tropical countries. And neo-classicism, imported from the mother-country, held sway over the more prevalent Baroque style of other Latin American countries.

The twentieth century has brought the gradual development of a truly individual and native school of painting. Vincent, a primitive who paints charming canvases of Haitian life, is one of its more promising members.
HONDURAS

HEAD OF A MAIZE GOD
Trachyte, height of head with plume 22 inches, without plume 11 1/2 inches
Mayan culture
From Copan, 400-700 A.D.
Lent by the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge

Long before Columbus sailed along its hostile shores, Honduras had seen the growth and decline of a great cultural center of the Maya Empire. The Mayans were the most important of the Indian tribes living in the country, and in the north they built a city, Copan, whose magnificent ruins are a lasting monument to the first true civilization in Central America. The city spread over many acres, a lower level and a partially artificial cliff top. Steleae with human figures atop were erected every twenty years; some were painted, as this stunning head may have been, with red pigment. In the almond-shaped eyes, long nose, and slightly curling upper lip, this head is typical of Copan sculpture; it was originally part of the decorative scheme on a temple façade.
INDIA

DANCING SIVA (1300-1500 A.D.)
Bronze, 46 inches high (including base);
diameter, 39¾ inches
Lent by The Cleveland Museum of Art

Fluid motion in eternal stone or bronze was achieved by the sculptors of India to a remarkable degree. Working within strictly prescribed priestly formulas, they succeeded in representing a freedom of action that is truly astonishing.

Here, Siva, most powerful of Hindu divinities, appears as the cosmic dancer (Nataraja) treading on evil, surrounded by a halo of flames, and expressing by the attitudes of his hands various symbolic ideas of vital significance.

The Hindu writers tell us that “the more human a god is made to appear, the less like a god he must be.” The device of extra arms was adopted solely to enable the artist to express more exactly the definite attributes of the god. As “Lord of the Dance,” Siva is expressing the constant change and flow of all creation.

CHARLES FABENS KELLEY
IRAN

MEDALLION CARPET from the Mosque of Ardebil, 1539

Length, 23 feet, 11 inches; width, 13 feet, 5 inches
Inscribed: the work of Maqṣūd Kāshānī

Lent by Mr. J. Paul Getty, Los Angeles; through Duveen Brothers, New York

Persian carpets have traveled throughout the world telling of Persian love of color, intricate design, inventive pattern, and superb craftsmanship.
In a country as arid as Persia, flowers are highly prized, and Persian gardens are famous in poetry and art. Most of the carpets bear highly conventionalized floral designs so that those who walk upon them may imagine they are walking through a garden.

From the mosque of Ardebil came this magnificent carpet, famous not only for its glowing color and beautiful design, but also because it was originally woven for use in the mosque and is dated 1539. Its rich pattern repeats the gorgeous tracery wrought on the vaulted surfaces above it by the mosaic workers who made their mosques sparkle like jewels.

CHARLES FABENS KELLEY

IRAQ
SON OF GUEDEA, 2200 B.C.
Alabaster, 5 inches high
Chaldean
Lent by Mr. Joseph Brummer, New York

Ancient Mesopotamia possessed a culture of barbaric richness, crude and vigorous. Particularly expressive is its sculpture, carved in stone by untempered metal.

At Lagash, about 2200 B.C., a powerful priest-governor, Gudea, did everything possible to gain prestige and perpetuate his name. A strong school of sculpture there helped him considerably, and, in consequence, numerous statues of Gudea are still in existence, many of them bearing dated inscriptions. The quality of execution is usually high, but this small head is one of the finest of all. It comes from a standing figure, the lower part of which is in the Louvre. Only the essential characteristics are represented and these, in the simplest and most direct fashion. So powerfully is character rendered that the head might easily be of monumental proportions.

CHARLES FABENS KELLEY
Liberia, now a developing Negro republic, is the seat of a once powerful secret society which, although still in existence, has lost much of its prestige. The Poro was much more than a religious sect, for initiation into the society, which was obligatory for every boy and, in some cases, girl, meant acceptance in the community life. This secret organization ruled the tribes in both peace and war; the Poro leaders were men of high standing, and often spiritual powers were attributed to them. A complicated ritual, lasting over a long period, governed the initiation practices; the boys swore secrecy on pain of death to the Hawk Devil, then underwent certain ordeals to prove their worthiness. Three years of education followed in which each boy was taught the craft or trade for which he was best fitted, and, with a final ceremony which symbolized the idea of rebirth, the young men were sent back to their tribes. During all the ceremonies, Poro leaders and teachers wore masks such as this highly imaginative one; each leader had his own distinctive mask characteristic of the particular Gli or Spirit he portrayed.
LUXEMBOURG

NICHOLAS OF VERDUN (ca. 1200)
Plaque of a Bishop
Champlevé enamel, 6 inches high
The Lucy Maud Buckingham Collection, The Art Institute of Chicago

The historic Duchy of Luxembourg was over twice the size of the Grand Duchy of the present day. It covered approximately the region bordered by the Meuse, the Moselle, and the Lower Rhine where the famous Benedictine monasteries in Stavelot and Echternach were cultural centers for the “minor arts” during the Middle Ages.

From the eleventh century on, the craft of the goldsmith became a predominant feature here. Skilled artists produced elaborate objects for ecclesiastical use. A few names have been recorded such as Godefroid de Claire, who was commissioned by the Stavelot convent, and Nicholas of Verdun, whose work can be traced all over Central Europe. Their shrines and other reliquaries in gilt copper decorated with reliefs and enamel plaques belong to the greatest examples of medieval craftsmanship. Oswald Goetz
The old adage, "There is nothing new under the sun," proves false when American pre-Columbian art is taken into consideration. Here is something new. No background of Oriental or European principles form the basis of this art. The ultimate purpose, the ideals, the means by which they are achieved are completely different, and we must change our aesthetic point of view accordingly in order to appreciate this new beauty.

Art in Mexico had a long period of development during which many styles and cultures evolved over several epochs. Although little is yet known about them, it is evident that throughout there is a homogeneity of purpose which gives the art uniqueness and distinction.

The Aztecs, originally an unimportant if warlike tribe, gained so in power that they overcame the Mayan Empire to rule in its stead. Coatlicue was their goddess of earth, or life; but death to the Aztecs was inextricably bound with life, so that their goddess of earth became the brutal goddess of death as well. In spite of the horror this statue inspires, there is a magnificent beauty in its vigor and in its savage force.

THE NETHERLANDS

JAN VERMEER OF DELFT (1632–1675)
The Milkmaid, ca. 1655–1657
Oil on canvas, 18 x 16¾ inches
Lent by the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
Painting in Holland reached its most glorious period during the seventeenth century when the yoke of Spanish domination was finally shaken off. Innumerable highly talented artists matured together to form a school which was and still is the envy of all. They portrayed their own small country, her pleasing towns and villages, happy people, and sweet countryside.

Vermeer is one of the greatest painters of all time. His forty remaining works are masterpieces of exquisite color, precisely balanced composition, breathtaking atmospheric effects. The father of modern landscape art in his acute renditions of light, Vermeer is a poet in his clarity of vision, in the peace of sunlit homes which he paints with loving care.
PATU (nineteenth century)
Whalebone with inlays of haliotis shell
Length 15½ inches, width 5¾ inches
Lent by the Chicago Natural History Museum

The general conception of New Zealand as a little island off the tip of Australia is quite fallacious; actually it is a very big island and it is 1200 miles across the Tasman Sea from Australia to New Zealand. The Polynesians, who formed the Maori nation, settled there between 1250 and 1350 A.D. Springing from an entirely original source, Maori art shows a wonderful sense of proportion, a forceful style, precise design, and exquisite workmanship. Everything he used in daily life was covered by the Maori with carving which he copied from his body tattooing; the designs were very intricate, based on spirals, volutes, circles, and straight lines. Though he used human forms, the Maori artist was careful not to copy them too exactly for fear the dead ancestor he represented would be reincarnated to haunt him. This richly decorated patu was meant for show rather than use; its original purpose was to slit unfortunate victims from ear to ear.

New Zealanders are proud of this native talent. They have erected a Maori School of Art in Rotorua, and museums in the country devote much time and space to the collection and preservation of Maori objects.
NICARAGUA

POLYCHROME TRIPOD BOWL
WITH RATTLE FEET
Baked clay, height 5½ inches, diameter 9 inches
From Ometepe Island, Nicaragua
Lent by the Los Angeles County Museum

Inhabited in pre-Columbian times by the Nahua tribe, Nicaragua could never quite overcome the spiritual influence of the nearby Mayan and Aztec cultures; yet in spite of the resultant provincialism, Nicaraguan art attained a bold and rugged forcefulness which marks it as distinctly individual. The pottery work, for instance, with its many complex patterns and forms and the delightful imagination shown in the supports, like the rattle feet here, presents a unified picture of achievement.

Nicoya polychrome ware is the name generally given to the painted pottery found in the region between Ometepe and the Gulf of Nicaragua. Ometepe (the name, of Indian origin, means Two Mountains) is the largest island in Lake Nicaragua, has two volcanic peaks and two Indian villages. Many pots of similar vigorous design have been unearthed here.
NORWAY

EDVARD MUNCH (1863–1944)
Women on the Strand, 1898
Woodcut in color, 17¾ x 19¾ inches
Lent anonymously through the courtesy of the Worcester Art Museum

In the nineteenth century, new centers of artistic expression developed in the North. Hans Christian Andersen, Hendrick Ibsen, and August Strindberg gave the literary keynote to a Scandinavian school of art characterized by starkest realism and a peculiar form of mysticism emanating from a philosophy of complete negation. Edvard Munch, painter and printmaker, was the greatest exponent of northern feeling and thinking in the visual arts. Perhaps the best of his work was in woodcut. No one could convey more impressively than he the great melancholy of the North, unless it were Sibelius.

CARL O. SCHNEIWIND
PANAMA

CROCODILE GOD (about 1000 A.D.)
Gold disk, diameter 12 inches
From Sitio Conte, Cocle Region
Lent by the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge

Because of its strategic position on the isthmus between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Panama was the scene of many a battle between the covetous Spanish and English adventurers and the natives of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. An added attraction, of course, was the endless supply of gold. The natives had become polished technicians at working this material and fashioned freestanding objects, usually small because of the limitations of gold, or work in relief like this gold disk, the largest of its kind yet discovered in Cocle. The forceful design represents a crocodile, which animal was venerated by most Central American Indians; here, rendered in stylized form, he is the symbol of a god.
THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

MAN'S COSTUME (contemporary)
From Bila-an tribe.
South Central Mindanao, Philippine Islands.
Lent by the Chicago Natural History Museum

The Bila-an, a mixed group, largely Mayan, who occupy the mountainous region in South Central Mindanao, are an agricultural people with no definite organization or distinctive tribal customs.

Like other tribes of this section, they excel in the art of weaving and embroidery and their artistic expression has attained a high degree of development in their costumes which are made of hemp cloth. This fabric is woven on primitive hand looms from the fiber of abaca or Manila hemp, decorated by tie and dye weaving and polished with a shell. Garments are usually ornamented with elaborate and skillfully wrought needlework, often enhanced by the addition of tiny hand-cut pearl disks. It is to be regretted that the coming of the Spaniards with their over-zealous missionaries thwarted this rather shy, yet completely individual artistic expression.

The palm leaf and rattan hat crowned with notched chicken feathers is worn only for special occasions.

MILDRED DAVISON

POLAND

POLISH CARPET (late seventeenth century)
Wool, 9 feet, 6 inches x 6 feet. Woven in a factory founded in the sixteenth century by Joseph Potocki in Brody, near Lwow.
Lent by Countess Rose Dzieduszycki, Niesluchow, Poland

For centuries Poland has been one of the cultured nations of Europe. In the days of Catherine de Médicis and Louis XIV, the Polish ambassadors to the French Court were famous for their accomplishments.

Geographically this country is a connecting highway between the East and West and the mingling of these two opposite traditions
has given its works of art an interesting personality peculiarly their own.

Among Poland's many artistic enterprises was rug weaving. While the kelim or tapestry woven type was particularly characteristic, the tufted variety was also made there. These were woven in the manner of the French Savonnerie carpets but show a simpler, more angular treatment of the design.

Mildred Davison
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

EDWARD WOLFE

Portrait of Pat, 1939

Oil on canvas

Lent by the artist, London, England

The problem of the relationship between a man's artistic output and his personal environment is one that is often discussed, if seldom solved. In Edward Wolfe's case, it would seem undeniable that his native land has played an important role in shaping the character of his art, in spite of the fact that he has spent most of his mature years away from South Africa. He is fond of Negro subjects, for instance, and paints them frequently, with respect and dignity. The vibrant brilliance and warmth of his colors, their jarring intensity seem to indicate an inborn love for the gay, tropical colors of his own country. Like his contemporaries all over the world, Wolfe succumbed to the lure of far-off lands and has traveled much, on constant look-out for new scenes of inspiration.
U. S. S. R.

MOSCOW SCHOOL WITH NOVGOROD TRAITS
The Ascension, sixteenth century
Tempera on panel, 26\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 27 inches
Lent by Mr. George R. Hann, Pittsburgh

From the twelfth century to the present in Russia, there has been a tradition of icon painting which reveals an astounding continuity of achievement. The icon was brought from Byzantium, Russia’s main influence in both religion and art; it always represented a sacred person or scene and, as such, was worshipped for itself. Artists who painted them were deeply venerated; in fact, two were canonized. Designed primarily for the church, icons gained so in popularity that even each peasant’s family owned at least one. They were placed in every conceivable spot to inspire worship and adoration.

The icons, of which The Ascension is a particularly fine example, were until recently in danger of loss; candle smoke, dirt, and repainting had detracted from their beauty. The Soviet Government set up the Central National Restoration Workshops; with exquisite scientific exactitude, their technicians clean and restore all icons, thus saving a great heritage of beauty.
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GILBERT STUART (1755–1828)
Mrs. Richard Yates, 1793
Oil on canvas, 30⅜ x 25 inches
Lent by the National Gallery of Art (Mellon Collection), Washington, D.C.

In 1793, after several years abroad, Gilbert Stuart returned to this country to become the most accomplished portrait painter since Copley. Though noted for his portraits of Washington, he also painted large numbers of the leading citizens of the day. This clear, crisply painted likeness of the wife of a prominent New York lawyer is typically American in its forthrightness and unassuming simplicity.
YUGOSLAVIA

IVAN MEŠTROVIĆ (1883– )
My Mother, 1908
Marble, 36½ inches high
The Robert Alexander Waller Memorial Collection,
The Art Institute of Chicago

Although Yugoslavia has a five-century-old tradition of literature, not until contemporary times has a truly great man been born there to create a visual art. The pesmas, the Croats’ national poems, are similar in content to the French troubadour tales; with an almost savage strength and fiery imagination, these Hero Songs glory in the fortitude of an undaunted people. Ivan Meštrović interprets this poetry in sculptural terms; he captures the poignancy and vehement passion of the Slavic soul. Giving visual terms to his fervent love for his country, he forced the development of an original Croatian art movement. More Asiatic than European in character, but with elements of both, Yugoslavian art impresses through its strangely moving ardor, its ecstatic restraint.