

H O N O L U L U A C A D E M Y O F A R T S



September, 1962

Dear Member:

One of our members came to my office recently to tell me how delighted he was at the new appearance of the French Room. To him the room had always lacked appeal or even interest. Now suddenly, with the addition of a chandelier and a magnificent 18th century portrait, he found himself absorbed in an atmosphere which was deeply evocative of a past era and in which all the objects exhibited became meaningful because of their interrelationship.

His reaction was extremely gratifying to us, because this effect was precisely what we had been striving to attain. The room is not a large one. It is not even a *room* in the sense of being an attempt to duplicate the exact appearance of a French 18th century interior. Rather it is an assemblage of works of art and objects of high craftsmanship which, because of their intrinsic quality and their stylistic relationship to one another, can provide the visitor with an awareness of some of the major determinants of an age long past.

The example of the French Room serves very well as an illustration of how the Academy operates as an institution whose major function is to collect and exhibit works of art. To the layman, this would appear to be a simple enough matter. The fact is, however, that it takes years (in this case over a quarter of a century) to assemble the particular objects which do the job properly. It also means that it may be necessary to investigate the resources of entire continents to discover the materials we seek.

The details are interesting. In 1936 Mrs. Charles M. Cooke gave the chairs, the mirrored mantle, a console table and the carved wood doors, selected in Paris by Mrs. Walter F. Dillingham, acting on Mrs. Cooke's behalf. It wasn't until 1961 that the superb wood trophy panels and the set of three painted *grotesqueries* were found in Rome and their purchase made possible by Mr. Robert Allerton's generosity.

Meanwhile, the search for a central focus—a chandelier—was underway. Few people realize what a subtle element a chandelier is. To be sure, it was a necessity in the 18th century to provide light, but the chandelier serves an even more important function than that, by becoming in essence a sort of sculpture, turning what otherwise would be empty void into telling space. It also acts as a pivotal element, making the spectator more conscious of the surroundings of that space and, so to speak, anchoring his attention within the room.

Not any chandelier would serve the purpose for this particular room. It must be exactly the right size, its decoration must reinforce the decorative scheme of the room as a whole, it must be commanding but at the same time not overwhelming. By and large American dealers threw up their hands at the problem, genuine chandeliers of the periods being almost non-existent on the market. Dealers in France and England did their share for us. Private collectors, agents, even auctioneers were alerted.

We looked at scores of photographs. At one point a magnificent example turned up in an antiquities fair in Brussels, a chandelier of great historic importance which we coveted but which we were happy to see bought by the Belgian government to be returned to the palace in Ghent for which it had originally been made.

It was an American dealer who at long last discovered the example we now own, in Milan. It was very expensive, but we had the funds to pay for it, thanks to the 1961 auction. When it arrived from Italy and was painstakingly reassembled (it consists of hundreds of individual pieces requiring days to be put together) it became obvious that the long wait had been worth all the trouble.

The tone of the room was now established. We needed only to find a superb painting for the one weak spot still remaining. Again scores of photographs were examined, and the Director haunted the art dealing establishments of America and Europe. Fine paintings of the period are also in short supply, and it is only by the greatest good fortune that he was able to find in Paris last June the perfect picture, the portrait of Monsieur Meunier by Adelaide Labille-Guiard, one of the great portraitists of her day.

The story is not really complete, however. Nothing is ever entirely "finished" in the museum. We hope to be able to add other bits and pieces—porcelains of Sevres, perhaps a fine desk—to the ensemble. But the basic goal has been reached, and the Academy offers it to the public with great pride.

Meanwhile, the same kind of search goes on with respect to other times and other cultures. It is a fascinating and complicated process, fascinating because of its obvious rewards and complicated because of the paucity of our available funds. The success of the French Room bolsters our optimism in regard to the process for the museum as a whole.

ROBERT P. GRIFFING, JR.
Director

ACTIVITIES AT THE ACADEMY

Ten scheduled exhibitions and related activities promise a varied and stimulating program for museum visitors during the fall and early winter of 1962.

From September 13 through September 30 the Sixth Annual Exhibition of Advertising Art and Design, Artists and Art Directors Club of Hawaii, will be on view.

From September 20 through September 23 Ikebana International, Honolulu chapter, will hold an exhibition FALL FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS.

From September 27 through November 4 there will be a one-man show of recent work by Tseng Yu-ho, after which the paintings will be shown in San Francisco and Stockholm.

Two exhibitions will open simultaneously on October 9. THE ART OF CAROLINE PETERSON will be a one-man show of flower arrangements by Mrs. Peterson, timed to celebrate the publication of the book ART OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT IN HAWAII by Mrs. Peterson and Kenneth Kingrey. Mr. Kingrey will give two lectures on the book, one for members Wednesday, October 10 at 10:30 a.m. and a second for the public Thursday, October 11 at 8:00 p.m.

An exhibition of the work of the noted graphic designer Ladislav Sutnar will open the same day. This exhibition, organized by the Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, is being shown at a number of American museums and universities.

The annual exhibition of the Honolulu Orchid Society will be held from October 18 through October 21 during Aloha Week.

The annual ARTISTS OF HAWAII and HONOLULU PRINTMAKERS exhibition will again share the same dates, this year from November 8 through December 9. Edward B. Thomas, Assistant Director of the Seattle Art Museum, will serve as one of the jurors for each of these exhibitions. Mr. Thomas will lecture on the noted Seattle painter, Mark Tobey, for members, Wednesday, October 24 and for the public Thursday, October 25.

The first of a series of two exhibitions devoted to Honolulu architecture will open November 29. DISAPPEARING HONOLULU ARCHITECTURE, offered in cooperation with the Women's Architectural League of Honolulu, will emphasize turn-of-the-century buildings. I will give a preview lecture of this exhibition for Academy members and the Women's Architectural League Wednesday, November 7. In celebration of the Christmas season and related to the DISAPPEARING HONOLULU ARCHITECTURE exhibition will be a VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS SHOW from December 11 through December 30.

The concert series will continue this fall, with programs planned on the average of once a month. A special Christmas program will be given Sunday, December 16. The annual Christmas party for members' children will be held Friday, December 14.

WILLIAM A. MCGONAGLE
Assistant to the Director

BOOK SHOP

We are happy to announce that the Book Shop will open officially in mid-October. Plans now call for volunteers to staff the shop, located in the Kinau court, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays. Anyone interested in helping with this interesting job is asked to call the Membership Office.

The Book Shop will stock art publications exclusively, in both paperback and standard bound editions, and will also take special orders from members, who will receive the members' discount on all purchases. Notepaper, postal and Christmas cards and Academy and other museum publications will also be carried.

In September members will receive a list of publications immediately available. They will also be offered ART OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT IN HAWAII by Caroline Peterson and Kenneth Kingrey, which will be carried by the Book Shop in both the special limited boxed edition and the regular edition.

The Book Shop staff will be happy to handle your special requests. Please place your holiday orders promptly, as they must be filled on the mainland. We look forward to being of service.

RALPH F. GLENN
Assistant to the Director

News Letter

HONOLULU, HAWAII

SEPTEMBER, 1962

VOL. 4, NO. 2

HONOLULU ACADEMY OF ARTS

SEC. 34.65(E) P.L.&R.
U. S. POSTAGE
Paid
HONOLULU, HAWAII
PERMIT NO. 119