TRENDS IN THE REALM OF ART—LOCAL NEWS OF THE WEEK

A PERSONAL COLLECTION

Miss Bliss as a Collector Could Not Be Pressed Within Boundaries of a Type

By ELISABETH LUTHER CARY.

WHEN we heard of the death of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss a few days ago the first feeling with many of us was the keen regret that comes with the loss of a clear and delicate personality not to be classified as a type. Even as a collector of art she could not be pressed within the firm boundaries of a type. She strayed, not willfully, but wistfully, from the very old to the very new, plucking from one period a piece of sculpture, from another an object d'art; but in painting her sympathies were largely with the [illegible]

Davies was among the [illegible] she found him, and she [illegible] on such warm and [illegible] visions of childhood as "The Tree" and "Dancing Children," though such deeper dreams as "Unicorns" and "Sleep," to the classic line in "Glyph" and "Constellations," including on the way the decorations for her music room representing his nearest approach to cubistic statement. It would be quite impossible to see Davies whole, without seeing him in the Bliss collection; and, most certainly, it would be impossible to see the Bliss collection fairly represented without its distinguished group of Davies paintings.

Davies and Redon will seem to many appropriately associated in a company of paintings leaning toward the side of individuals as against schools. Each, doubtless, is impossible to follow with success as pupil follows master. Each, also, has borne the oppressive name of mystic. But the mysticism of Davies is also the opposite of Redon's. Davies in his thought personifies elemental forces, the tides that move incessantly in obedience to a fundamental rhythm, the seasons that change endlessly from swelling bud to falling leaf; dawn and awakening, sleep and dreams; the downward fall of waters, the upheaval of the earth into forms of mountains; the energy of struggle, the zest of adventure, the exultation of joy. Whatever his works to the student of aesthetics, they lead from their roots in natural experience toward the wonder with which nature is regarded by the human mind whenever the human mind has courage to linger upon her miracles.

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REDON also was deeply impressed by nature and has left eloquent descriptions of places seen during his youthful wanderings. Certain places where he stayed longest seem to have lived in his memory without the loss of a single detail. With, possibly, some consciousness of the unnatural or supernatural light in which his work seemed to the spectator to be bathed, he emphasized his constant recognition of and obedience to the laws of nature, and proclaimed that an artist who thus constrained himself was thereafter free to follow any line, choose any subject, any means of presenting his idea.

This, of course, is incontrovertible; but in Redon's work one is aware of an interest far removed from the natural phenomena so rich in suggestion for Davies. Dreams became at the outset of his creative life his preoccupation. "Dans le Rêve" is the title of the first group of drawings published by him, and he was henceforth to use the mechanism of the dream to produce his haunting effects.

In the collection formed by Miss Bliss her well-nigh matchless tact of selection is nowhere more clearly revealed than in her choice from the the works of Redon. The dominating example is the "Silence," a dim head with closed eyes emerging from a hollow dark, a hand, two fingers pressed against the lips, nothing more definite and nothing more required to suggest the environing silence into which we pass, in which, in truth, we live in spite of the clamor endlessly assailing our senses. This rendering of an illimitable mental experience would in itself suffice to justify Redon's belief that [illegible] the jungle, and a work of consummate art.

Such work brings to the dullest of us the intimation that life for those who look closely and feel strongly declines to be pressed into a strictly limited and clear-cut form. Its unlimited energy cannot be confined within fixed boundaries of time or space. It overflows our conscious control and sweeps on into a region that, so far as the human mind can conceive, has no definition, "world without end" is all that we can say of it.

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IT is far more than the greater number of artists in any age do say; and in our own age, so youthful in its triumphant physical and mental activities, this tendency to emphasize rational solutions and exact statement. One of the characteristics of choice in the collection upon which we touch is recognition of this unquenchable flow of vitality beyond accuracy, beyond precision, beyond knowledge. Miss Bliss, despite the sensitive and practical attitude she maintained toward acquisition, herself possessed something of the fugitive temper by which her favorite artists escaped the cramping of vitality by implacable efficiency.

Here is Seurat, threatened by the perfection of his science, showing us in his drawings, as he did not in his completed paintings, how the clarity of his composition, the systematic order of his technique, trembled into the movement of life through his apprehension of an "other world" not to be checked and captured by science. Possibly no other artist shows so convincingly at one time both the splendor of science and the freedom of art. Had he not died at the early age of 32, the age of full blooming in artists of genius, his painting doubtless would have taken on something of the mystery of his drawings.

Here is Cézanne who followed with patience and with passion the path that led beyond arrival, who found nature "very complex" and "the progress to be made interminable." He is represented by several fine examples, but most thrillingly by the "Blue Landscape" through which the mind makes its way with no end in sight.

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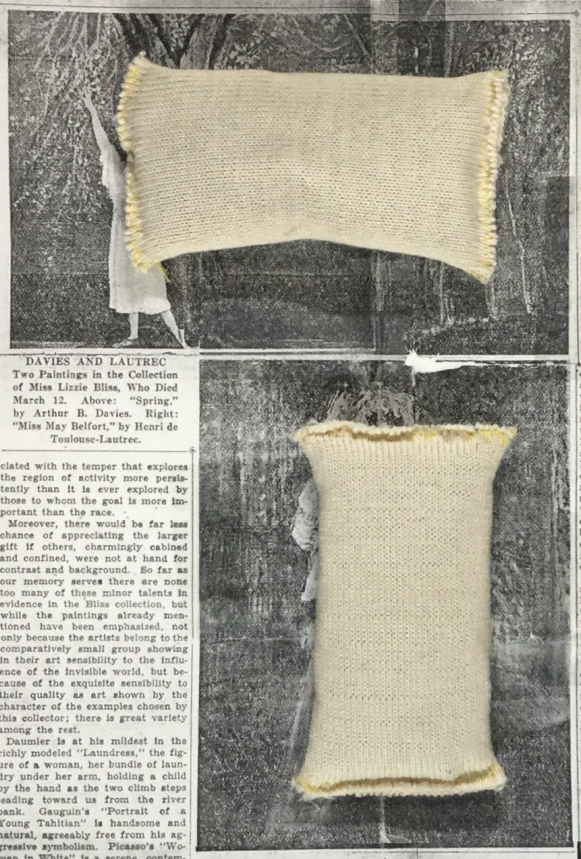
TO pretend that the collection as a whole maintains this supremacy of the incomplete and uncompletable would be absurd. Probably no large collection could be formed by any one person that would be free from precise ideas precisely carried out, and to attempt such would be to travel perilously if not to hurl one's self upon disaster. Incompleteness has no value unless it is associated with the temper that explores the region of activity more persistently than it is ever explored by those to whom the goal is more important than the race.

Moreover, there would be far less chance of appreciating the larger gift if others, charmingly cabined and confined, were not at hand for contrast and background. So far as our memory serves there are none too many of these minor talents in evidence in the Bliss collection, but while the paintings already mentioned have been emphasized, not only because the artists belong to the comparatively small group showing in their art sensibility to the influence of the invisible world, but because of the exquisite sensibility to their quality as art shown by the character of the examples chosen by this collector; there is great variety among the rest.

Daumier is at his mildest in the richly modeled "Laundress," the figure of a woman, her bundle of laundry under her arm, holding a child by the hand as the two climb steps leading toward us from the river bank. Gauguin's "Portrait of a Young Tahitian" is handsome and natural, agreeably free from his aggressive symbolism. Picasso's "Woman in White" is a serene, contemplative figure, arousing no questions and no antagonisms. In "Hina Tefatou" we get the Gauguin of Tahiti and the exotic subject matter in which lay his great interest. Pissarro from whom Pissarro's early style is represented. There are Renoir, supposed to have stemmed, also Degas, Derain, Monet, playing into the rhythm of modern art. There are Modigliani and Chirico. From the American group may be taken such vivid contrasts as Prendergast dreaming true of aristocratic form as it existed in the Greek past and adding to it a sensitiveness purely modern; Walt Kuhn intent upon the expression of concentrated character in contemporary types; Paul Dougherty of robust vision and technique.

There are many more. This notice is of course, far from being complete, and from lack of sufficient familiarity with the collection could not be that. It is merely an attempt to capture and fix an impression of extraordinary depth of a personal taste and intuition that with the passing of Miss Bliss has vanished from our world of art.



DAVIES AND LAUTREC
Two Paintings in the Collection of Miss Lizzie Bliss, Who Died March 12. Above: "Spring," by Arthur B. Davies. Right: "Miss May Belfort," by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

EXHIBITIONS NOW ON IN THE GALLERIES OF NEW YORK

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THERE is a challenge in suggestion. The abstract paintings by Louis Marcousis (at the Valentine Gallery) hints at the original object, and from this starting point the imagination builds an objective picture on the lines suggested by the artist. That there might be no confusion, this spectator ignored the titles.

Warm and mellow color and compact design keep all the work in much the same mood, something more luxurious than just comfort and less self-indulgent than luxury. There are tables overlapping playing cards and bread; there are staircases in arabesque against violoncellos; there are doors opening onto the beginnings of good breakfasts and luncheons. Cheating ourselves, we looked to see the title of No. II—"Soleil Couchant." Even here the sun is brought into the room.

As concretely as the Dutch artists, Louis Marcousis is a painter of beautiful interiors.

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SOMETHING about the painting by Daniel Garber persuades you that he would give a faithful reproduction of the scene before him is, for this writer, the most attractive. There is part of the Colonial column, very gleaming white, round and substantial; there is a huge flower-pot, substantial also, and then there is a wicker chair, thin but sinewy and quite able to hold its own under any sort of strain.

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At the Grand Central Galleries until March 28, Dorothy Ochtman is showing flower paintings and still-life. The artist did graduate work in the history of art and archaeology at Bryn Mawr, and this interest may show itself in a choice of subject, in the painting of metal and pottery and things that have already been designed beautifully by man. These she combines with flowers. A nice sense of color and tone makes each composition a harmonious whole.

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CHARLES AND HARRY CARLSON, father and son, have been showing once more at the Morton Gallery. Père Carlson is doing more of the same charming thing with its straightforward color (green is green and red is red). The drawing is child-like. Carlson Fils is becoming stronger, more assured, more adult has not humiliated himself by giving the child silly or ugly things—even though the child might prefer them! (?). The textiles are particularly good. Two complete rooms, one for a girl of 8, the other for a boy of 12, are the most conspicuous exhibits.

This page did an enthusiastic paragraph about the Russian picture books when they were first seen about two years ago. They are everybody's picture books. Good maps, good pottery, good furniture, good silver, good posters, good reproductions are everybody's business. And it was quite thrilling to see reproduced a Metropolitan Museum picture that this writer adored as a child—the picture of a little boy.

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The Woman's City Club, until the middle of April, is showing work by its artist members, some thirty in all. Pottery, painting, etching, drawing and water-color.

PERSIAN ART IN BROOKLYN

Well-Organized Display of Beautiful Objects at the Museum

A PECULIAR feature of the Persian character, says Sir E. Denison Ross in his recently published little volume called "The Persians," is "reluctance, connected with a belief in the Evil Eye, to express either surprise or admiration." It is fortunate that the Evil Eye isn't rampant here. There is much to admire in the Persian exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, and tacit enjoyment can be a real hardship.

No detailed report on the treasures from many collections assembled in this comprehensive showing can, however, be given at this time. Tassilo Adam, of the museum, has taken pains to provide a suitable amount of "background" material. There are specimens of art produced by very ancient cultures—Sumerian, for instance—with which the Persian is more or less closely allied. Some of these date from thousands of years B. C. Much later fusions or parallels are encountered, too, such as Arabic-Persian work in stone and, still later, examples of Mogul painting, which may be compared with Persian miniatures of corresponding periods. The wonderful art of the Sassanian epoch, whose influence continued to be felt long after the collapse of the dynasty and adoption of the Islam faith, replacing Zoroastrianism, is of course illustrated.

What provides the richest feast for modern eyes is work done from perhaps the twelfth century on. It is thought to have been in about the thirteenth century that the fine Rhages ceramics began to be made. Arthur Upham Pope, in his "Introduction to Persian Art," says that "while the characteristics of clay even in the earliest periods in Persia were always respected * * * full realization of the possibilities of the craft came with the Seljuk and Mogul potters from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, and under their sensitive hands," he observes, "guided by a perfect taste and a lively imagination, inspired and helped by poets, calligraphers and painters, the peak of the ceramic art was reached."

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THE inspiration of poets and of splendid craftsmen is indeed felt in the beautiful textiles and superb rugs, in the tiles and seal cylinders, in bronzes and lacquers and glass, in bookbindings and the truly magic paintings that found a place between these covers.

The exhibition emphasizes, one is grateful to discover, quality rather than quantity. The arrangement of the uncrowded rooms is excellent. And the educative value of a display like this becomes pointedly apparent as one notes the influence that Persian art already has had, and will perhaps increasingly have, in the field of contemporary Western design. Exhibits of American textiles attesting such contact and often arguing intelligent assimilation (as opposed to abject copying) are at hand, while the pupils of various schools, working on similar motifs, have produced many attractive, sometimes very expert, patterns on paper.

Fortunately the Persian exhibition is to remain until toward the end of May, so that ample time for public inspection is assured.

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ON another floor at the Brooklyn Museum will be found an extensive series of clever decorative paintings done in fresco secco by Stowitts (employing just a single name seems to be quite popular these days). Stowitts, who has taken his subjects from life, sets out to preserve for us "vanishing India," including "types, arts and crafts." The 150 canvases are called "ethnographic painting," but for most spectators the appeal is likely to be decorative rather than scientific.

As a matter of speculation, it may be doubted whether an India such as Stowitts portrays will ever vanish, for the simple reason that we are led strongly to suspect it never existed outside the romances. This, however, has little bearing on the subject of Stowitts's art itself, which is highly accomplished, very colorful, and—always from a decorative angle—glamourous.

E. A. J.

OTHER SHOWS

THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP," at the Art Centre, had, according to Mr. Burliuk's disarming explanation, a far better excuse than most shows for being late. Were not most of the exhibitors Russian? The aim of this show is to present in not too formal fashion certain personalities whose works are not habitually seen in local galleries.

Dr. Brinton writes a short historical sketch of a few members—of David Burliuk, "the father of Russian modernism"; of Joseph Teichner, who, though forced to do hack painting for a living, worked until he merited his present reputation as scenic artist and decorator. We have seen Kadar Bela's recent exhibition, and John Graham's. We all know the work of Stuart Davis and the palette Mrs. Klous uses. We should like to see more of Hoffmann, in whose "Circus" there is a terrifying space for flying acrobats under the tent. Minna Harkevy is here; so is Elinor B. Gibson, with a beautifully painted bit of Brittany. Soudeikin is known in America for his splendid decorations; Alexander Portnoff for his bronze of John Dewey. There is a general merry madness about this show, that might have been less merry had it been ready on time.

The Society of Illustrators is also established at the Art Centre, showing original works that have been reproduced in magazines and newspapers. There were made for reproduction and are better in their second than in their original state. Also one misses the captions. Technically and sentimentally, they cover the field. There are the smart young bloods, the old-fashioned lovers, the Siegfried of modern warfare; there is the appeal (with a proper sob) of a by-gone day and there are Garrett Price's things for The New Yorker. We encounter the smart café, the English Millais kind of thing, and, bless him, Denys Wortman, formerly of The World, now drawing his cartoons for The World-Telegram.

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IN showing at the "seven American masters of water-color," Mrs. Halpert of the Downtown Gallery says that for years she has been hearing arguments about which of them is the greatest. Now they are all here on her walls to talk for themselves. Holger Cahill, in the foreword, says something pertinent to those who have belittled this medium.

With the exception of Marin, and possibly of Pop Hart, these Americans have in common something that one expresses badly by calling it a chaste point of view. Here are tact and taste and charm and delicacy and precision and elegance and subtlety and meticulousness. But if you are the kind of person who likes range and depth and earthiness and even vulgarity better, then American water-colors seem a bit thin—though one trembles to say so in the face of Mrs. Halpert's enthusiasm. The Carnegie Institute has invited the show as it stands.

The water-colors are lovely. Charles Demuth's delicate plums, Preston Dickinson's grapes (as delicious as their color); Charles Sheeler's "Autumn Leaves," so crisp they will never die. "Central Park" by A. Walkowitz, in pastoral mood, spreads over the entire earth a spirit of gentle Sunday afternoon. "Maine Fisherman" is one of the best water-colors William Zorach has painted. And one of the best in the show. Then you come to the more richly flavored stuff of Pop Hart's "Arab Bathing His Horse." And of course, Marin.

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Wynn Richards is exhibiting photographs at the Delphic Studio until March 30. Her early work is tinged with an imitation of painting, a phase that photography went through and is now safely over. Her present work is smart and humor-

GALLERY NOTES AND COMMENT

BERTRAND ZADIG'S one-man show of wood-blocks and linoleum cuts opened at the Art Centre March 16. The work ranges from illustration to portraiture.

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In the Library Gallery of the Brooklyn Museum, from March 25 through April 7, work done in classes conducted by Kate Mann Franklin may be seen.

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Announcement is made of the removal of the Backstiftz Galleries from the Ritz-Carlton Hotel to the Sherry-Netherland. A group of paintings is now on view in the new quarters.

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Among the many garden sculpture shows now on is one at the Pearson Gallery. It lasts until April 10.

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At a new gallery, the Westward, recently opened at 424 West Twenty-third Street by Florence Newcomb and S. Annette Washburn, will be found paintings by Gertrude Nason.

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Suzanne Silvercruys Farnum will address the Wohan's Press Club of New York on Saturday, March 28, at the Hotel Pennsylvania on the subject of "Beauty in Art." Other speakers will be Hardinge Schoole, Gerry Abbott and Forrest Grant. Mrs. R. Edsen Doolittle will have charge of the program and Mrs. Mary Ellen Wilson will preside.

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Rare old flower pictures are on view at the Chintz Shop, 443 Madison Avenue. This collection includes types from many countries.

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The work of Pierre Brissaud of Paris is now on view in the exhibition rooms of Pedlar & Ryan.

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NEWARK: An ecclesiastical exhibition is now in progress at the Newark Museum. French and Spanish church furniture from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, together with a few examples of stained glass and sculpture, are shown. Models of Gothic, Eastern and English cathedrals, made by the late Mayor Raymond of Newark, are also on view. A group of Spanish textiles, largely of the sixteenth century, lent from the collection of Frederic F. Wilkins, will be found in the first-floor galleries.

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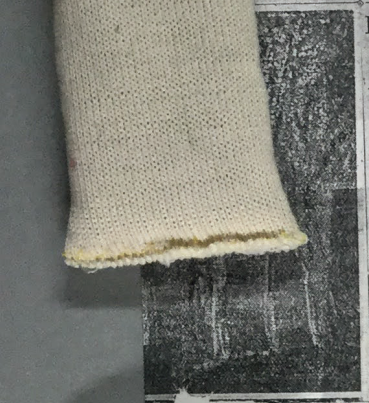

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PERSIAN ART IN BROOKLYN

Well-Organized Display of Beautiful Objects at the Museum

A PECULIAR feature of the Persian character, says Sir E. Denison Ross in his recently published little volume called "The Persians," is "reluctance, connected with a belief in the Evil Eye, to express either surprise or admiration." It is fortunate that the Evil Eye isn't rampant here. There is much to admire in the Persian exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum, and tacit enjoyment can be a real hardship.

No detailed report on the treasures from many collections assembled in this comprehensive showing can, however, be given at this time. Tassilo Adam, of the museum, has taken pains to provide a suitable amount of "background" material. There are specimens of art produced by very ancient cultures—Sumerian, for instance—with which the Persian is more or less closely allied. Some of these date from thousands of years B. C. Much later fusions or parallels are encountered, too, such as Arabic-Persian work in stone and, still later, examples of Mogul painting, which may be compared with Persian miniatures of corresponding periods. The wonderful art of the Sassanian epoch, whose influence continued to be felt long after the collapse of the dynasty and adoption of the Islam faith, replacing Zoroastrianism, is of course illustrated.

What provides the richest feast for modern eyes is work done from perhaps the twelfth century on. It is thought to have been in about the thirteenth century that the fine Rhages ceramics began to be made. Arthur Upham Pope, in his "Introduction to Persian Art," says that "while the characteristics of clay even in the earliest periods in Persia were always respected * * * full realization of the possibilities of the craft came with the Seljuk and Mogul potters from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, and under their sensitive hands," he observes, "guided by a perfect taste and a lively imagination, inspired and helped by poets, calligraphers and painters, the peak of the ceramic art was reached."

* * *

THE inspiration of poets and of splendid craftsmen is indeed felt the beautiful textiles and superb rugs, in the tiles and seal cylinders, in bronzes and lacquers and glass, in bookbindings and the truly magic paintings that found a place between these covers.

The exhibition emphasizes, one is grateful to discover, quality rather than quantity. The arrangement of the uncrowded rooms is excellent. And the educative value of a display like this becomes pointedly apparent as one notes the influence that Persian art already has had, and will perhaps increasingly have, in the field of contemporary Western design. Exhibits of American textiles attesting such contact and often arguing intelligent assimilation (as opposed to abject copying) are at hand, while the pupils of various schools, working on similar motifs, have produced many attractive, sometimes very expert, patterns on paper.

Fortunately the Persian exhibition is to remain until toward the end of May, so that ample time for public inspection is assured.

* * *

ON another floor at the Brooklyn Museum will be found an extensive series of clever decorative paintings done in fresco secco by Stowitts (employing just a single name seems to be quite popular these days). Stowitts, who has taken his subjects from life, sets out to preserve for us "vanishing India," including "types, arts and crafts." The 150 canvases are called "ethnographic painting," but for most spectators the appeal is likely to be decorative rather than scientific.

As a matter of speculation, it may be doubted whether an India such as Stowitts portrays will ever vanish, for the simple reason that we are led strongly to suspect it never existed outside the romances. This, however, has little bearing on the subject of Stowitts's art itself, which is highly accomplished, very colorful, and—always from a decorative angle—glamourous.

E. A. J.

OTHER SHOWS

THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP," at the Art Centre, had, according to Mr. Burliuk's disarming explanation, a far better excuse than most shows for being late. Were not most of the exhibitors Russian? The aim of this show is to present in not too formal fashion certain personalities whose works are not habitually seen in local galleries.

Dr. Brinton writes a short historical sketch of a few members—of David Burliuk, "the father of Russian modernism"; of Joseph Teichner, who, though forced to do hack painting for a living, worked until he merited his present reputation as scenic artist and decorator. We have seen Kadar Bela's recent exhibition, and John Graham's. We all know the work of Stuart Davis and the palette Mrs. Klous uses. We should like to see more of Hoffmann, in whose "Circus" there is a terrifying space for flying acrobats under the tent. Minna Harkevy is here; so is Elinor B. Gibson, with a beautifully painted bit of fruit. Serge Soudelkin is known in America for his splendid decorations; Alexander Portnoff for his bronze of John Dewey. There is a general merry madness about this show, that might have been less merry had it been ready on time.

The Society of Illustrators is also established at the Art Centre, showing original works that have been reproduced in magazines and newspapers. These were made for reproduction and are better in their second than in their original state. Also one misses the captions. Technically and sentimentally, they cover the field. There are the smart young bloods, the old-fashioned lovers, the Siegfried of modern warfare; there is the appeal (with a proper sob) of a by-gone day and there are Garrett Price's things for The New Yorker. We encounter the smart café, the English Millais kind of thing, and, bless him, Denys Wortman, formerly of The World, now drawing his cartoons for The World-Telegram.

IN showing her "seven American masters of water-color," Mrs. Halpert of the Downtown Gallery says that for years she has been hearing arguments about which of them is the greatest. Now they are all here on her walls to talk for themselves. Holger Cahill, in the foreword, says something pertinent to those who have belittled this medium.

With the exception of Marin, and possibly of Pop Hart, these Americans have in common something that one expresses badly by calling it a chaste point of view. Here are tact and taste and charm and delicacy and precision and elegance and subtlety and meticulousness. But if you are the kind of person who likes range and depth and earthiness and even vulgarity better, then American water-colors seem a bit thin—though one trembles to say so in the face of Mrs. Halpert's enthusiasm. The Carnegie Institute has invited the show as it stands.

The water-colors are lovely. Charles Demuth's delicate plums, Preston Dickinson's grapes (as delicious as their color); Charles Sheeler's "Autumn Leaves," so crisp they will never die. "Central Park" by A. Walkowitz, in pastoral mood, spreads over the entire earth a spirit of gentle Sunday afternoon. "Maine Fisherman" is one of the best water-colors William Zorach has painted, and one of the best in the show. Then you come to the more richly flavored stuff of Pop Hart's "Arab Bathing His Horse." And of course, Marin.

* * *

Wynn Richards is exhibiting photographs at the Delphic Studio until March 30. Her early work is tinged with an imitation of painting, a phase that photography went through and is now safely over. Her present work is smart and humor-

GALLERY NOTES AND COMMENT

BERTRAND ZADIG'S one-man show of wood-blocks and linoleum cuts opened at the Art Centre March 16. The work ranges from illustration to portraiture.

* * *

In the Library Gallery of the Brooklyn Museum, from March 25 through April 7, work done in classes conducted by Kate Mann Franklin may be seen.

* * *

Announcement is made of the removal of the Backstiz Galleries from the Ritz-Carlton Hotel to the Sherry-Netherland. A group of paintings is now on view in the new quarters.

* * *

Among the many garden sculpture shows now on is one at the Pearson Gallery. It lasts until April 10.

* * *

At a new gallery, the Westward, recently opened at 424 West Twenty-third Street by Florence Newcomb and S. Annette Washburn, will be found paintings by Gertrude Nason.

* * *

Suzanne Silvercruys Farnum will address the Woman's Press Club of New York on Saturday, March 28, at the Hotel Pennsylvania on the subject of "Beauty in Art." Other speakers will be Hardinge Schoole, Gerry Abbott and Forrest Grant. Mrs. R. Edsen Doolittle will have charge of the program and Mrs. Mary Ellen Wilson will preside.

* * *

Rare old flower pictures are on view at the Chintz Shop, 443 Madison Avenue. This collection includes types from many countries.

The work of Pierre Brissaud of Paris is now on view in the exhibition rooms of Pedlar & Ryan.

* * *

NEWARK: An ecclesiastical exhibition is now in progress at the Newark Museum. French and Spanish church furniture from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, together with a few examples of stained glass and sculpture, are shown. Models of Gothic, Eastern and English cathedrals, made by the late Mayor Raymond of Newark, are also on view. A group of Spanish textiles, largely of the sixteenth century, lent from the collection of Frederic F. Wilkins, will be found in the first-floor galleries.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, MAY 28, 1968

Paintings on File in Modern Museum's New Unit

Study Center Makes Stored Works More Accessible for Scholarly Use

By RICHARD F. SHEPARD

The Museum of Modern Art unveiled yesterday a new center that will let scholars examine comfortably and quickly the objects in its collection not on exhibit.

The Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center occupies three floors, mostly in the north wing, the remodeled former home of the Whitney Museum of American Art. It is the first effort by a major museum to make its entire collection available for systematic study.

In well-lighted, carpeted rooms with desks and chairs, are spread out the tens of thousands of works not on view publicly. But they are easily accessible to anyone who makes an appointment.

The material includes painting, sculpture, photographs, drawings, prints, architectural drawings, design objects and written material obtained in the course of producing 760 exhibitions and 300 museum-sponsored books over 40 years.

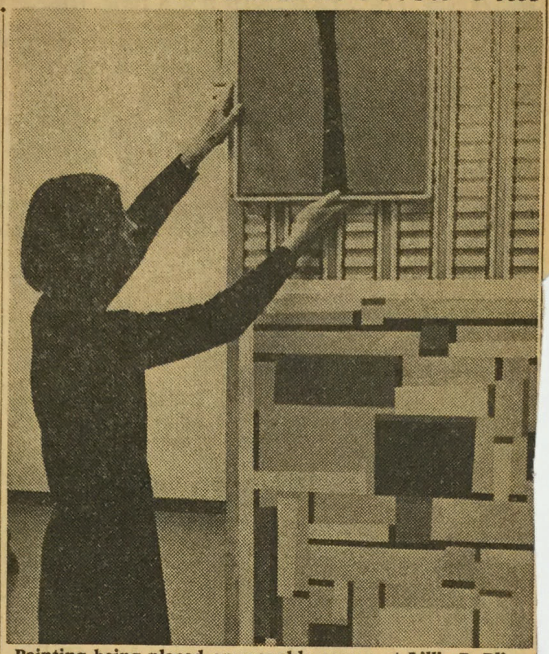
"We felt strongly about the fact that much of what we have can't be seen," said Rene d'Harnoncourt, director of the museum, who announced plans for the center in 1949. "It is the first study center that has the art itself. In universities and libraries, they have books, slides and prints, never the work itself."

Bates Lowry, who will succeed Mr. d'Harnoncourt as director on July 1, said the study center was expected eventually to have a fellowship program that would permit art scholars to study there for as long as a year.

In a speech at a dedication-day luncheon, William S. Paley, board chairman of the Columbia Broadcasting System and president-elect of the museum, paid tribute to Miss Bliss, who founded the museum in 1929 with Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan and the late Mrs. John D. Rockefeller Jr. A niece, Mrs. Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson, is

Mr. Paley said the collection had 25,000 art works and 25,000 books, catalogues, albums and photocopies of works in other museums.

"The real significance of the new study center is that it will put all these notable materials to far greater [illegible]an has ever been possible in the past," he said.



Painting being placed on movable screen at Lillie P. Bliss International Study Center at Museum of Modern Art.

A tour of the facilities presented a picture of neatly furnished working quarters with easily accessible files and ingenious devices for displaying art.

On the third floor, for example, the painting and sculpture department has on tap 600 sculptures and 2,000 paintings that are not on public view. Almost 1,000 paintings have been placed on 11-by-13 foot aluminum screens that slide out of file-like side-storage on rollers and can be easily moved into another room for scrutiny.

The paintings are arranged by the names of the artists. The small sculptures fill glass-fronted shelves in a large room. The larger works fill the center of the room, standing on pallets for easy moving by mobile lifts similar to the "hi-lo's" that move cargo on the piers.

Dr. Anne Coffin Hanson, who will become director of the center on Sept. 1, said that part of the facilities, such as the drawings and prints department, had been open since 1964.

"One of the first things we should do is to start a newsletter to tell people what we have here," said Dr. Hanson, who will work on projects involving scholarly research and will also develop and expand educational services.

There are some objects that have not been integrated into the museum's study center. Most of these are architectural models that are too large to be displayed in the present area.

"Our interest is not in archives, but in how they are being used," Mr. Lowry explained.

As a touring group entered the design department area, with its hoard of 1,500 objects, neatly but nonobjectively displayed in well-lighted cases, giving the illusion of entering a department store showroom, a young woman was heard to say softly, to a staff member, "Get your order book ready."

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both

Artillery (50 [1919]: 455–60, and 51 [1919]: 445–49), and in 1944 he published the book *Mathematics for Exterior Ballistics* to make his knowledge available for World War II. In 1925 he received the first Chauvenet Prize of the Mathematical Association of America for his paper on algebraic functions and their divisors, a topic outside his main field of research. He did some brilliant teaching in quantum mechanics in the late 1920s when that subject was just breaking. He summarized this in "Calculus of Variations and the Quantum Theory," his retiring address as vice president of section A of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, later published in the *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society* (38 [1932]: 201–24).

Bliss was elected to the National Academy of Sciences (1916) and the American Philosophical Society (1926) and was president of the American Mathematical Society (1921–1922). He served as an editor for the *Transactions of the American Mathematical Society* (1908–1916) and on the board of the (then new) National Research Council fellowships (1924–1936). Bliss headed a government commission to construct precise rules for assigning to states seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, under the vague constitutional provisions for proportional representation. He managed the planning and construction of Eckhart Hall as a mathematics-physics research-teaching facility of the University of Chicago (1929–1930). Bliss died in Chicago.

• Gilbert Bliss, "Autobiographical Notes," *American Mathematical Monthly* 59 (1952): 595–606, was published posthumously from a 1938 manuscript. It is particularly significant for Bliss's account of his teachers as well as his statement of his philosophy of graduate education. For a short biography see Ronald S. Calinger, "Gilbert Ames Bliss," *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (1970). Lawrence M. Graves, "Gilbert Ames Bliss," *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society* 58 (Mar. 1952): 251–64, is the official obituary with a complete list of his publications. E. James McShane, "Gilbert Ames Bliss," National Academy of Sciences, *Biographical Memoirs* (1958), includes an informed critique of his work in ballistics as well as in the calculus of variations. Also see Saunders MacLane, "Biographical Memoirs: Gilbert Ames Bliss (1876–1951)," *Yearbook* of the American Philosophical Society (1951). W. L. Duren, Jr., "Graduate Student at Chicago in the Twenties," *American Mathematical Monthly* 83 (1967): 243–47, repr. in *A Century of Mathematics in America*, pt. 2, ed. Peter Duren (1989), recalls Bliss and his department from a student's point of view. MacLane, "Mathematics at the University of Chicago," in the same volume, covers the Bliss period in a history of the department.

WILLIAM L. DUREN, JR.

BLISS, Lillie P. (11 Apr. 1864–12 Mar. 1931), art collector, patron, and benefactor, was born Lizzie Plummer Bliss in Boston, Massachusetts, daughter of Cornelius Newton Bliss, a dry goods merchant who was active in Republican Party politics, and Elizabeth Mary Plummer. In 1866 the family moved to the Murray Hill Section of New York City, where as a young girl Bliss was privately educated. She lived there until 1923, when her mother died. Bliss acted as hostess in New York and Washington, D.C., for her father, who served as secretary of the interior (1897–1899) in the cabinet of William McKinley after declining McKinley's offer to run as his vice president; he was also treasurer of the Republican National Committee from 1892 through 1908.

Bliss's life in New York centered on her devotion to promising artists and musicians. Although "in manner she was quiet, . . . the gentlest, and certainly the most modest of women, she was absolutely independent in her taste and courageous as to her method of doing things" (Eleanor Belmont in *Memorial Exhibition* catalog [1931]). She was an accomplished pianist, founded the Kreisel Quartet, and supported the Juilliard Foundation for musical education, performance, and publication.

However, the visual arts overtook even Bliss's passion for music. Her most enthusiastic cultural commitment was to the International Exhibition of Modern Art, known as the Armory Show, which opened at the Sixtieth Regiment Armory on 17 February 1913. Arthur B. Davies, a painter and one of the organizers of the Armory Show, was her mentor and close friend. Attracted to the lyrical quality of his work, Bliss had been purchasing his paintings since 1907. Davies was knowledgeable about European art, and, as a result of their alliance, Bliss began collecting art in earnest by purchasing five paintings and some drawings and prints from the show. In 1921 she was one of those who persuaded the Metropolitan Museum of Art to organize an exhibition of works of the impressionists through Pablo Picasso's pre-cubist period. However, the hostile press reaction to the exhibition caused that museum to avoid another exhibition of the kind for some time.

In spite of her professional interest and support for the arts, Bliss kept most of her purchases out of the sight of her family, who found modern art bizarre and distasteful. On her mother's death in 1923, Bliss purchased the top three floors of an apartment house on Park Avenue, where she could hang all of her pictures freely and entertain her wide circle of friends from the worlds of art, music, and theater.

The great collector of modern art John Quinn died in 1924, and Davies died in 1929; the sales of their collections made it more apparent than ever among progressive New Yorkers that a museum devoted to mod- 5 men+
ern art was needed. In 1929 Bliss, together with two other influential and public-spirited women, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller and Mary Quinn Sullivan (both collectors and part of the New York establishment), founded such an institution. The three knew each other through their visits to art galleries and frequently met for tea at the Cosmopolitan Club. The necessity of founding a museum devoted only to modern art was a subject of great importance to them.

The opening of the Museum of Modern Art on 7 November 1929 was a courageous action that revolutionized the idea of the art museum in the United States; at the time it was unusual to exhibit early twentieth-century art or the work of living artists in an

American museum. With Rockefeller as ~~president~~ Treasurer, Bliss was an actively engaged vice president of the museum until her death in New York City. However, the new museum did not yet have its own collection of masterpieces. When Bliss died, she provisionally bequeathed to the museum the major part of her important collection on the condition that within three years it raise $1 million to endow its survival as a permanent institution. Because of the depression the estate lowered its price to $600,000, and the necessary funds were raised among the trustees. The terms of the Bliss bequest were met, thus securing a magnificent group of modern paintings that became the cornerstone of the museum's collection. Included were works by Paul Cézanne (twenty-one), Honoré Daumier (one), Edgar Degas (eight), Paul Gauguin (two), Henri Matisse (two), Pablo Picasso (two), Odillon Redon (two), Auguste Renoir (one), Jean Jacques Rousseau (one), and Georges Seurat (nine), and fifty prints.

A significant and generous provision of Bliss's will allowed the museum to sell or exchange works from the Bliss collection to acquire other important or needed objects, such as the 1939 acquisition of Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* in exchange for Degas's *Racecourse* (1884). Hundreds of works in the museum collection are credited as "acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest." During her lifetime she was known as Lillie, using the name Lizzie only when she signed checks; after her death, Cornelius Newton Bliss, Jr., her brother and executor, had her name legally changed to Lillie when her collection was provisionally bequeathed to the Museum of Modern Art.

Bliss was much beloved, and although her time during the last years of her life was largely spent on museum affairs, many others were generously remembered in her will: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Society of the New York Hospital, the Broadway Tabernacle Society, the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the Brooklyn Museum of Arts and Science, and several individuals. However, her foresight, courage, and generosity as a collector and patron were most widely noted and acknowledged in the obituaries and tributes that appeared in newspapers and periodicals throughout the world. More personally, her kind and gentle nature was recalled by her friend Eleanor Belmont, who delivered one of the eulogies at the service preceding the opening of the memorial exhibition *The Collection of the Late Lillie P. Bliss* at the Museum of Modern Art on 17 May 1931: "God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December."

• Correspondence and other relevant documentation on Bliss can be found in the Lillie P. Bliss Scrapbook, A. Conger Goodyear Papers, Public Information Scrapbooks, and Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Cobb Oral History, all in the Museum of Modern Art Archives. Catalogs published by the Museum of Modern Art for exhibitions of the Bliss collection include *Memorial Exhibition: The Collection of the Late Miss Lizzie P. Bliss* (1931) and *The Lillie P. Bliss Collection* (1934), in which her one known piece of writing, "From a Letter to a National Academician," appeared. *Modern Masters from the Collection of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss* (1932) was published by the John Heron Art Institute, Indianapolis, Ind., when her works were shown there. For secondary source material, see Alfred H. Barr, Jr., "Chronicle of the Collection" and "The Lillie P. Bliss Bequest," *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art* (1977), pp. 620–24, 651–53. References to Bliss can be found in Milton W. Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show* (1988); Geoffrey T. Hellman's two-part article "Profiles: Action on West Fifty-Third Street," *New Yorker*, 12 and 19 Dec. 1953; Hellman, "Profile of a Museum," *Art in America* 52 (Feb. 1964); Russell Lynes, *Good Old Modern: An Intimate Portrait of the Museum of Modern Art* (1973); and Aline B. Saarinen, *The Proud Possessors: The Lives, Times and Tastes of Some Adventurous American Art Collections* (1958). Obituaries and editorials are in the *New York Times*, 13 and 16 Mar. 1931.

RONA ROOB

BLISS, Philip Paul (9 July 1838–29 Dec. 1876), hymnodist and musical evangelist, was born in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, the son of Isaac Bliss and Lydia Doolittle, farmers. As an adolescent, he worked on farms and in lumber camps. Bliss proclaimed his personal conversion to Christ in 1850 and joined a Baptist church. After attending a select school in East Troy, Pennsylvania, in 1855 and working on a farm during the summer, he taught school in Hartsville, New York, during the winter of 1856. The following year he received his first formal instruction in music at J. G. Towner's music school in Towanda, Pennsylvania. During 1858 Bliss taught school in Rome, Pennsylvania, where he boarded with the Young family. In 1859 he married Lucy Young, the oldest daughter of his hosts; the couple had two children. In the early 1860s Bliss taught music at Pennsylvania schools during the winter months, worked on his father-in-law's farm during the summer, and attended occasional normal academies of music in Geneseo, New York.

In 1864 Bliss sent one of his song manuscripts to George F. Root, a music publisher in Chicago, Illinois, who purchased it. Root was known as a "layman's composer" because he wrote and published music primarily for performance by amateur musicians in the home, classroom, and church. Like Root, Bliss composed songs that appealed to the musical tastes and performing abilities of church congregations. In the summer of 1865, the Union army drafted Bliss but discharged him only two weeks later because the Civil War had ended. At the invitation of Root, Bliss moved to Chicago in November 1865 to work as a representative for the music publishing firm of Root and Cady. For nearly a decade he wrote songs, gave concerts, and held musical conventions throughout Illinois and neighboring states. In 1870 he became the director of music for the First Congregational Church in Chicago, where he also served for a time as Sunday school superintendent. His first songbook, *The Charm*, was published in 1871, and several more followed in the next few years. They became especially popular in the growing number of Sunday schools across the nation.

In his songwriting, Bliss sometimes collaborated with Root or Ira D. Sankey, the song leader for the

Oxford University Press

March 1999

Dear contributor:

Ten years in preparation, the 24-volume *American National Biography* was published, under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies, by Oxford University Press in January of this year. You and more than 6,000 other contributors wrote the 17,450 articles that have made the *ANB* the preeminent biographical dictionary in the field of American history. Confirming the work's stature, the American Library Association has awarded the *ANB* the Dartmouth Medal for best new reference work produced in the United States.

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THE ARTS

THE ART OF THE MIDDLE AGES BY FRANCIS HENRY TAYLOR—THE SONGS OF DEBUSSY BY LOUIS DUREY—EXHIBITIONS—BOOKS

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Lilya, by Eugene Speicher
Exhibition of Pictures of People at The Knoedler Galleries
Lent by The Cincinnati Art Museum

CONTENTS

NOTE: *In order to review and illustrate adequately the achievement of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art in opening its Mediæval Wing, it was found necessary to postpone until May reviews prepared for our April issue on The Independent Society, the National Academy and on several other current exhibitions.*

The Contents of previous issues of THE ARTS are fully listed in the International Index on Periodicals and The ART INDEX

A GOODLY HERITAGE

THE bequest of the Lizzie Bliss Collection to the Museum of Modern Art, after certain conditions have been fulfilled, makes it easier to imagine the Museum installed in some central location, such as the new Rockefeller development, and permanently financed with some such sum, for a starter, as, for example, $3,000,000. The bequest is a nucleus round which to build; a magnet for other collections; a continuing, living reply to the doubters; a passing on of the torch; a goodly heritage. It begins the transition of the Museum from a temporary place of exhibitions to a permanent place of lasting activities and of acquisitions.

The formation of the Bliss Collection paralleled in time the long campaign of the pioneers in America for Modern art. It was begun when the martyrs would not bow their heads, however many rocks were thrown at Cubism, Picasso, Matisse and the others and when even Cézanne still stirred protests. It was begun before Fifty-seventh Street had laid eyes on a Modern picture, when those who now make millions in Modern art, looked upon their present remunerative favorites much as an estate lawyer might look upon a Red meeting in Union Square.

Formed during the years of a colorful fight the collection finds its destined home when the men for whom the martyrs fought are being swamped in unmerciful popularity. It grew up during the time when the old museums held off, obstinately against Modernity. The collection logically belongs to the young Museum which came into being after the battle for Modern art was over and the smoke had cleared away. Collections, like the Bliss Collection, made in sympathy with contemporary art are, therefore, its rightful inheritance.

The activities of the Museum of Modern Art have stimulated the New York public to a larger, keener interest in the art of this and the immediately preceding periods. Inevitably they have aroused, together with an immense amount of favorable comment, the proportion of adverse criticism that live institutions expect and cherish if only as one of the signs that they are alive. Success begets rivals just as depression undermines energy. What with rivalry and depression, hopeful enemies had already begun to ask whether we actually need a museum of modern art. I do not believe that the generous bequest of Miss Bliss was an intentionally affirmative answer to this question. Yet in effect it does answer the question in the affirmative. Miss Bliss was the type of collector who could believe in an institution before its foundations were set.

There are many types of American collectors. They differ too greatly in their individual desires and ambitions to be easily classified. For the Morgan and Frick type of collector collecting might be said to have been in part the result of a desire to express grandeur: a warm, large, uneven expression on the part of the late J. Pierpont Morgan; a more careful, more limited, more cal-

culating expression on the part of the late Mr. Frick. Emulation of Mr. Morgan undoubtedly played its role in starting Mr. Frick. Morgan differed radically from the Medici, inasmuch as he ignored the artists who were his contemporaries, but something of Medici grandeur and scope was his vague aim and in his conglomerate collecting he scooped up many treasures. I never saw him in a modern exhibition.

The fortune of Miss Bliss did not reach the bottomless pits of gold which Mr. Frick was credited with possessing. Her ambitions as a collector differed radically from the Morgan-Frick type of ambition. The symbols of grandeur were not her aim, but a life. Miss Bliss could never have enjoyed the confidently impersonal attitude toward art or the confident superiority toward living artists that Mr. Frick enjoyed. Before she could advance very far in collecting it was necessary for her to feel a personal friendship for one or more living artists.

Arthur B. Davies was her teacher. To be sure as her collection grew her confidence grew, but as long as the reign of Davies lasted his word was law. Miss Bliss did more than buy an endless number of the works of Davies in all the mediums which he employed; she converted others to a belief in the sanctity of his leadership. Art with her being on one side a kind of Davies religion she followed him in his admiration for Cézanne. She followed Davies also in his eventual complete absorption in the then current æsthetic beliefs in Paris. But Miss Bliss was a member of an established conservative New York family and she was not a child when Davies became the outstanding artistic influence in her life. So that, although intellectually sympathetic with the Davies viewpoint on French art, she did not follow him in what might be called his more experimental purchasing of the works of the then younger living men.

When I used to know the collection some years ago it was confined pretty generally to such nineteenth century leaders as Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Degas, with no important excursions such as John Quinn made in the realms of what the academicians used, more confidently then than now, to describe as "cock-eyed" art. On the American side the collection has always been very limited, consisting mostly of Prendergasts and Davies, with scattered specimens by other friends of Davies.

After the end of the Davies regime, and an interlude of patronage of the theatre Miss Bliss helped the Museum of Modern Art to organize. She was then drawn out toward a more understanding view of what other American artists are doing but none of the others superseded Davies in her esteem. Her Cézannes remained, for a very good reason, the apple of her eye. But to give the impression that Miss Bliss was merely led by the hand by Arthur B. Davies and told by him what to look at and what to buy would be entirely false. Miss Bliss was not a John Quinn. She was neither mercurial nor reckless. Combined with a capacity to admire and interest herself in artists was a kind of staunch

sobriety. Her friendship for Davies had its counterpart in the friendship of Mary Cassatt and Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer. But Miss Bliss was much more warmly concerned with the lives and welfare of the artists about her than was her collecting predecessor. That she took an acute interest in the development and eventually permanent installation of the Museum of Modern Art is sufficiently proved by the generosity of her bequest.

If anyone seriously could have asked the question: "Do we need a Museum of Modern Art?" no one could answer the question more firmly in the affirmative than did Miss Lizzie Bliss when she wrote her will. An artist herself in the realm of music, which also benefited from her generosity, collecting and her association with artists, painters, actors, musicians were to her of the utmost personal moment. She had sufficient appreciation of the enrichment that art brings to life to pay the final tribute to art that she so generously did pay. Many single ladies have tried to meet the attack of years with bridge and charity. Miss Bliss had the instinctive superiority to know that art is a far stronger weapon. And through her gift the torch that she held she passed on.

FORBES WATSON.

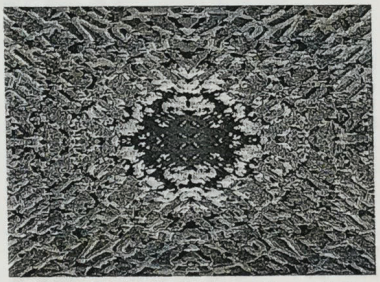
BUST OF AN ARCHANGEL

BY A FOLLOWER OF DUCCIO DI BUONINSEGNA

Johnson Collection

Art in America

November 2003



Cover: Bruce Pearson, *A Dangerous Game of Love and Faith* (detail), 2002, oil and acrylic on Styrofoam, 6 by 7½ feet. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. See article beginning on page 130.

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A Noble Legacy

Soon after the Museum of Modern Art in York was founded, the bequest of Lillie P. Bliss (1864-1931) played a crucial role in establishing a permanent collection for the fledgling institution.

BY RONA ROOB

The heart of the Museum of Modern Art has long been its unrivaled collection of painting and sculpture. The collection's original core was the gift of one of the museum's founders, Lillie P. Bliss. When the Modern opened its temporary facility in Queens, it was a joy to find that three icons of the collection, Cézanne's *Bather*, Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, were on view. All were acquired directly or indirectly through the bequest of Lillie Bliss, one of the least-known collectors of her generation.

In August 1930, nine months after the museum opened, Bliss executed her will, giving the cream of her holdings to the new museum. Her action, known only to her brother, affirmed her belief in an institution whose own foundations were not yet secure. The terms of her will were imaginative and generous: they allowed the museum to sell or exchange works from her collection to make other needed acquisitions; for example, *Les Demoiselles* was acquired in 1939 through the sale of a Degas oil for $18,000, plus an additional $10,000 in cash.[1] Her will set a standard for the future upon which others would build. When Bliss died less than a year later, in March 1931, her collection, which included masterpieces by Seurat, Gauguin, Matisse and Picasso, in addition to one of the most important privately held groups of Cézannes in America at that time, guaranteed the museum's future. Indeed, Lillie Bliss did nothing less than ensure that a museum devoted to modern art would exist in New York.

Bliss was one of a group of enlightened patrons whose vision revolutionized art collecting during the early 20th century. Several of them are known through institutions that bear their names: Albert C. Barnes, Duncan Phillips, Helene Kröller-Müller, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Solomon R. Guggenheim, Peggy Guggenheim.[2] However, there are others, less known and many of them women, such as Katherine Dreier, Galka Scheyer, the Cone sisters in Baltimore, and the Davies sisters in Wales,[3] who, like Bliss, were instrumental in paving the way for the appreciation of modern art. Although the products of different backgrounds and communities, all these collectors had several important things in common: they were born into the Victorian age; their activities bridged a transition into the modern era; and they combined a love of collecting, a passion for modern art and an interest in new ideas. They acquired the advanced art of the time for their personal satisfaction, and when their activity became known, they helped to create an environment receptive to modern art. Now, in a time of intense curiosity about collections and collectors, it is remarkable that Bliss is mostly forgotten. As an accomplished pianist and would-be playwright, she understood the artistic temperament, and was an informed and ardent patron of music and the theater. But for more than two decades, from 1909 to 1931, art was her passion. She believed in the artists she befriended and supported them by buying their work; following their lead, she boldly collected work by other artists whom they brought to her attention, notably Cézanne and Seurat.

Lillie P. Bliss, ca. 1924. Bliss Family papers, New York.

A woman of privilege who never married, Lillie Bliss cherished her privacy. She was rarely photographed, but we know she was of medium height, slightly plump, with a fair complexion and crystal-clear blue eyes. She dressed conservatively, wore little makeup and was unpretentious. She did not care about the latest couture fashions and preferred antique jewelry. She was not a strong physical presence and did not stand out in a crowd. Among friends, she was outgoing, pleasant and full of enthusiasm for what she was doing. A close friend described her:

> In manner she was quiet, somewhat unimpressive, yet always alert and at moments of which she was unconscious one caught the vision of a radiant spirit. Apparently the gentlest, and certainly the most modest of women, she was absolutely independent in her taste and courageous as to her method of doing things. Having an instinctive love of the arts and a finely trained aesthetic perception she wove a pattern of brilliant color into the stereotype background of a conventional life.[4]

Lillie left very few records in her own hand, either about personal relationships or her collecting activities. She wrote prolifically only to friends who were away or when she was out of town, and she requested that her papers be destroyed upon her death. However, it is possible to know and understand her as a person and as a collector through the letters that remain, through her involvement in events of her time and through other people's observations.

One of these people was her niece, Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Cobb (1907-2001).[5] Following Lillie's wishes, Eliza and her father, Lillie's brother Cornelius, burned Lillie's papers in the fireplace. Eliza Cobb later said that had her father not been there, she might have saved them or at least read them. She was very close to Lillie and spoke of her aunt warmly as a patient and loving person who adored her and her brothers. The closeness of the Bliss family was central to Lillie's stable "life full of happiness," as she wrote to her brother the year before she died.

We also know her through her friends in the music and theater worlds. One of the closest was the multitalented Eleanor Belmont, with whom Lillie shared many interests. Belmont, one of the most generous patrons of the Metropolitan Opera and the originator of its Opera Guild, was in addition an indefatigable fund-raiser for victims of World War I and the Depression. She was also a writer, and she gave up an illustrious career as an actress—George Bernard Shaw wrote *Major Barbara* for her—when she married the wealthy and powerful August Belmont who, among other interests, owned the IRT subway in New York and Belmont Raceway. Eleanor traveled, and Lillie kept her up-to-date on events in New York. In early 1930, Lillie wrote that the Modern Museum was flourishing and gave her a "gorgeous thrill and pleasure." Lillie's wide-ranging interests are apparent in these letters: unemployment, "crumbling stocks which never strike bottom," the museum, and what was happening in music and the theater. "If I attempted to write down a day's doings it would sound like one of [James] Joyce's most disconnected pages—minus the squalor, I hope!"[6]

Another friend was the actor Walter Hampden, whom Lillie met in the early 1920s. His *Cyrano* and *Hamlet* were the sensations of the theater world at that time.[7] According to Paul Hampden, the actor's son, on Nov. 20, 1923, Walter Hampden fell out of a tree in Act III of *Cyrano* and broke his heel. Lillie insisted that he and his family move from their hotel into her town house so he could be cared for properly. The Hampdens continued to live with Lillie when they were not on the road until her death in 1931. Paul Hampden described a very active household full of art—on walls, in boxes and in closets—with people coming and going and the telephone constantly ringing.[8] He also recalled that Lillie loved cars. She inherited three from her father and in 1925, with great excitement, traded a 1905 Rolls-Royce for the car of the day, a Pierce Arrow.

Bliss was Davies's major patron; he in turn helped shape her collection. And it was Davies who planted the idea in her that a permanent place for modern art should be established in New York.

Lillie, as she was always known to her family and friends, was born Lizzie Plummer Bliss in Fall River, Mass., on Apr. 11, 1864. She used the name Lizzie only when signing checks and her will. She was the younger of two daughters and the second of four children of Cornelius Newton Bliss (1833-1911) of Fall River and Mary Plummer Bliss (1836-1923) of Boston. Her older sister Nellie died in her tenth year when Lillie was seven years old, and a brother George, born 11 months after Lillie, died in infancy. Only Lillie and her brother Cornelius, Jr., 10 years younger than she and known as Neil, survive hood. Her father, a successful textile me moved the family to a six-story house at 29 E Street in the Murray Hill section of New Yo Lillie was two.

The Blisses were comfortably affluent ar cally influential. However, despite their pror the family lived outside the public eye. C Bliss was one of a coterie of Republican lea were in the forefront of party affairs for over ation. He was treasurer of the Republican Committee from 1892 to 1908, served as cha the New York State Republican Party, rep New York at Republican conventions, and offers to run for governor and mayor of New several occasions. He rejected William Mc offer to be his vice-presidential running mat and supported the choice of Theodore Roose he did accept the post of secretary of the in McKinley's first cabinet, serving from 1897 During the time that her father wo Washington, Lillie often acted as his hoste infrequent but lavish parties.

Until 1923, when her mother died, Lillie New York centered around the family's h 37th Street. As an adult she was responsibl mother's care: after the tragedy of losing dren, her mother had increasingly become bound invalid. Lillie ran the house, did the and took her mother on chauffeur-driven au rides in the afternoons. A week after her death she wrote: "My mother has been the my life—without her I seem lost—so I n wait with patience for the direction that w come."[9]

In New York, Lillie regularly attended went to the theater and frequented art g Throughout her youth the emphasis at hom music, and her love of music, both classical temporary, led her to support young piar opera students and to help found the Juillia Foundation (now the Juilliard School). W believed in someone's career or talent she s them unequivocally and often anonymously reader, she was fluent in French and ar plished pianist. In the early 1920s she w adapting Joseph Conrad's novel *The Rescu* stage, going so far as to contact Conrad's agent and to meet with publishers. Sl Hampden in 1924, "I have spent a solid wee six hours a day, with '*The Rescuer*' [sic]. typing it today at five o'clock and there fair copy awaiting your pruning knife."[10] Cobb recalled, Lillie was well informed a "tremendous life of the mind."[11]

The Bliss family's interest in music did n to art. One of Lillie's early connections with al arts was probably related to her father's ship in the Union League Club, of which was president from 1902 to 1906. It organize tions of works by living artists, lent by n artists and galleries such as Durand-R Knoedler; for example, in 1891, 34 works b Monet were shown. These shows were advertised, open to all and well attended.

However, it was her friendship with Archibald Herter (1865-1910) that bridge between music and art for Lillie. She ar shared a serious interest in music; h

Maurice and Charles Prendergast: The Spirit of the Hunt, *ca. 1917, tempera, pencil, gold and silver leaf on gessoed panel, 55 by 81½ inches, commissioned by Bliss. Private collection, Washington, D.C.*

Arthur B. Davies: One of 13 panels from Bliss mural, ca. 1941, oil on canvas, 92 by 108 inches. Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Museum of Art, Utica, New York.

The first masterwork purchased by MOMA through the Bliss bequest was Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, *acquired in 1939 for $28,000: $18,000 from the sale of a Degas oil, plus $10,000 in cash.*

Above, Edgar Degas:* Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills, *1884, oil on canvas, 18¼ by 21⅛ inches. Detroit Institute of Arts.

Right, Pablo Picasso:* Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, *1907, oil on canvas, 8 by 7 feet 8 inches. Museum of Modern Art.

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accomplished a cellist as she was a pianist, but additionally, Herter was educated and interested in art, having been brought up in an art-conscious home. In the months before her death, Lillie had near her three photographs: one of her mother, one of her father and one of Christian Herter. Herter was a year younger than Lillie, and Eliza Cobb believed that there was "a great romantic friendship between them. . . . Lillie was also a great friend of his wife's and sort of held the family together. . . . When he died she went and stayed with them."[12]

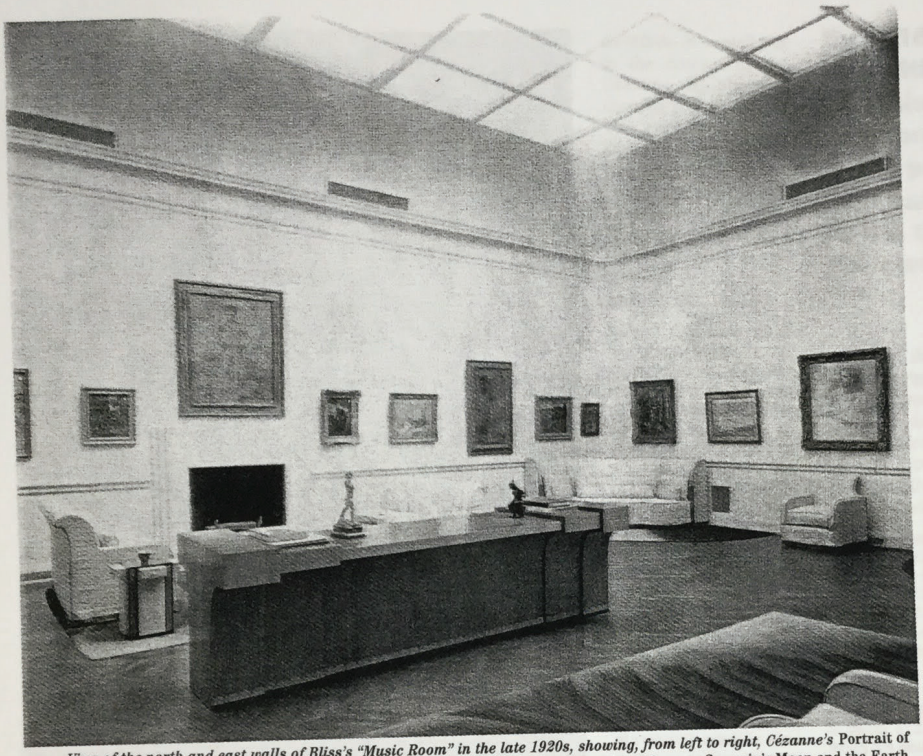
Christian Archibald Herter was the son of Christian Herter, head of Herter Brothers, the successful interior decorating firm which, on a grand scale, influenced American art and design during the period after the Civil War, when millionaires were building palatial houses. Christian Archibald was a physician and distinguished biochemist who is credited with helping to establish the study of biochemistry as a separate discipline in America. Through his friendship with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Herter in 1901 became a charter member of the board of directors of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (now Rockefeller University) in New York.

It is probable that Lillie's closeness to the Herter family resulted in her meeting Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. Adele Herter, Christian Archibald's sister-in-law, was a painter and friend of Abby's, whose portrait she painted during the summer of 1907. In March 1911, Abby Rockefeller and Adele Herter were two of seven women who signed the certificate of incorporation for the Women's Cosmopolitan Club in New York, and in 1911-12 Lillie was listed as a member. In 1929, Abby and Lillie would be among the founders of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Lillie's earliest known art purchases were probably from Frederick Keppel, a well-established dealer who knew Joseph Pennell and James McNeill Whistler and whose gallery was a few blocks from the Bliss home. In 1909, Christian Archibald Herter bought a small ink-and-sepia landscape drawing by Claude Lorrain from Keppel and gave it to Lillie. From August 1902 through February 1923, Lillie frequented Keppel's gallery, buying at first mostly etchings by Pennell and Whistler and later French drawings and prints by Charles Daubigny, Eugène Delacroix and, in January 1923, a Matisse print and a trial proof for Cézanne's *Bathers* lithograph.

Eliza Cobb recalled that when Lillie was in her 40s she was going through a personally difficult time—her father, who would die in 1911, was becoming old and infirm, and her dear friend Herter, who would die in 1910, was suffering from a fatal nervous disease. To lift her spirits she visited Dikran G. Kelekian, the fine-arts dealer, from whom she had purchased rugs, Persian pots and plates, and antique jewelry.[13] The Kelekian Gallery, which was in Lillie's neighborhood, resembled a Turkish bazaar and was one of the most interesting galleries in New York at the time. Lillie's friend Louisine Havemeyer and, after 1909, the John D. Rockefeller, Jrs., were regular clients. Additionally, Kelekian privately collected modern French art for his homes in New York and Paris during the first two decades of the 20th century. He was also a friend to many artists, including Mary Cassatt and Matisse. Kelekian was a respected connoisseur and by all accounts a kindly, brilliant man with an expansive personality.

One of those people with whom Kelekian enjoyed a warm personal relationship was Arthur B. Davies. Kelekian owned dozens of Davies prints, and Davies acquired Coptic textile fragments from him. Eliza Cobb believed that it was Kelekian who suggested in 1909 that Lillie go to the Macbeth Gallery to see an exhibition of Davies's work. After buying a painting



View of the north and east walls of Bliss's "Music Room" in the late 1920s, showing, from left to right, Cézanne's Portrait of Victor Chocquet Seated, *Cézanne's* Bather, *Daumier's* Laundress, *Cézanne's* Bottle of Liqueur, *Gauguin's* Moon and the Earth, *Derain's* Farm, *Gauguin's* Head of a Tahitian, *Cézanne's* Pines and Rocks, *Seurat's* Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor, *and Picasso's* Woman in White. *Museum of Modern Art Archives.*

and viewing the show several times, she asked Macbeth to arrange for her to meet the artist.

Lillie's life changed dramatically when she met Davies. Over the next two decades she became his faithful and principal patron and confidante. Davies was a romantic artist who was widely admired during his lifetime for his symbolic pictures of female nudes in idyllic landscapes. He was handsome, charismatic, articulate and persuasive, and he seems to have especially appealed to women. One of his contemporaries observed that "the woman who fears her own sensuality . . . finds in the art of Davies the man she wants men to be."[14] Through his travels abroad from 1893 on, he knew about current artistic trends in Europe. He was a galvanizing force in New York, and his advice was sought by dealers, collectors and artists. He was also a confident collector in his own right: from a Cézanne exhibition held at Alfred Stieglitz's gallery in 1911, he bought the only picture that was sold.

In 1931, Eleanor Belmont recalled:

> The person who most influenced [Lillie's] life in the field of painting was undoubtedly Arthur B. Davies. Impressed by his genius she purchased first one painting, then several, then almost anything obtainable, from drawing to large canvas, as he finished it. He led the way to exhibitions, talked painting to her, modern methods, plans for future work, and found a willing listener, disciple and patron. She broadened his horizon and revealed to him the rhythm of sound as he unfolded for her the rhythm of color and form. Assisted by Davies's knowledge and inspired by his dreams her delicate intuitive love of beauty developed rapidly.[15]

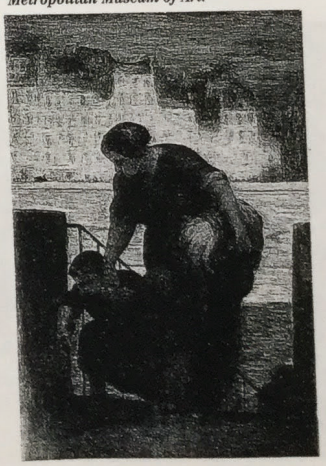
We can only speculate on the true depth of their relationship since no letters between them are known to exist. As her mentor and advisor, Davies helped to shape and form her collection almost from its inception. In the years following the Armory Show, under his tutelage, Lillie developed the eye of a collector. As their relationship matured, it was Davies, more than anyone else, who planted the idea in her that a permanent place for the exhibition of modern art should be established in New York.

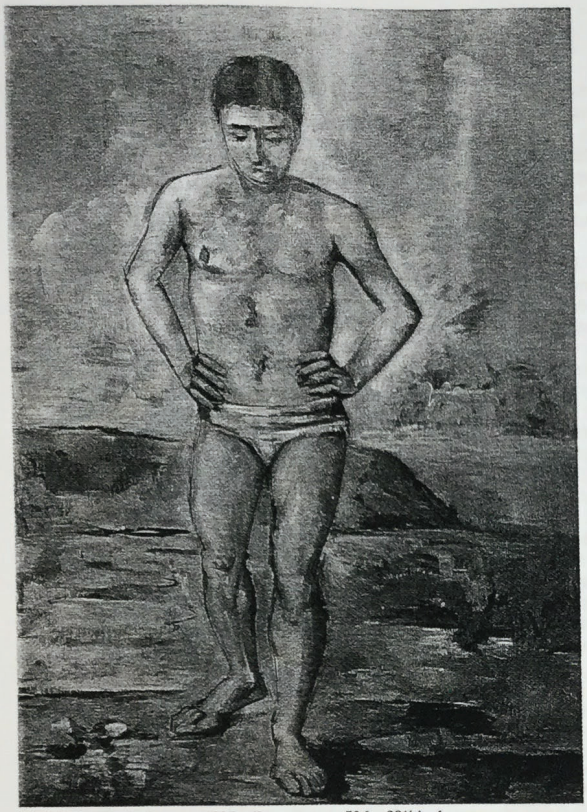
In 1911, Davies and others, concerned that their increasingly modern works were becoming unacceptable to the mainstream National Academy of Design in New York, formed the Association of American Painters and Sculptors. They planned to launch a large independent show devoted to contemporary works. Davies, the artist Walt Kuhn and the critic Walter Pach were determined that the exhibition should include the European avant-garde as well as the American independents. The result of their efforts was the International Exhibition of Modern Art, better known as the Armory Show, which opened in New York on Feb. 12, 1913, in the 69th Regiment Armory at 25th Street and Lexington Avenue. About 1,600 works were included. The show transformed New York's and perhaps America's attitude toward modern art from apathy to excited contention. Most critics at the time found the works "insane" and "degenerate." The *New York Times* warned that the show could "disrupt, degrade, if not destroy not only art but literature and society as well." A Chicago newspaper "lightheartedly" suggested that visitors to the show "smoke two pipefulls of 'hop' and sniff cocaine."[16] However, it aroused the curiosity of the public, 70,000 of whom came to see it in New York, Chicago and Boston.

By the time the Armory Show was being organized, Bliss and Davies had become good friends. Six weeks before the show opened, and probably at the suggestion of Davies, Lillie purchased a painting and a pastel by Degas and an oil by Renoir from the New York branch of the Durand-Ruel Galleries. All three works would be exhibited in the Armory Show. The Degas painting, *Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills*, formerly called *Racecourse*, a small oil of 1884 for which she paid $20,000, was the work the Museum of Modern Art would eventually exchange to acquire *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*.[17]

Lillie was one of the financial backers of the Armory Show, although her contributions remained anonymous at the time. She visited the exhibition daily, and it was there that she gained her first broad introduction to modern art. Largely because of Davies's inspiration and guidance she purchased two Odilon Redons, *Silence* (a painting on linen), for $540, and *Roger and Angelica* (a pastel), for $810. At the time of the Armory Show, Redon was little known in America. In addition to the painting and pastel, Bliss acquired seven of his prints. Other purchasers of Redon prints were Katherine Dreier, John Quinn and Davies. Bliss also bought color lithographs (two different versions) of Cézanne

Daumier: The Laundress, *1863, oil on wood, 19¼ by 13 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art.*





Cézanne: **The Bather,** *ca. 1885, oil on canvas, 50 by 38⅛ inches. Museum of Modern Art.*

Bathers, as did Walter Arensberg, Kuhn, Quinn, Mrs. Charles C. Rumsey and Stieglitz.[18] Soon after the Armory Show closed, she bought a little Cézanne, *The Road* (ca. 1875), from Davies.

The Armory Show expanded Lillie's art-world connections, and she became friendly with many New York dealers, collectors and artists. Her friendships with Kuhn, Charles and Maurice Prendergast, and Charles Sheeler began at this time. Among the collectors with whom she became acquainted was John Quinn, who took care of legal matters in connection with the Armory Show and was a collector of Davies's work. Quinn named Davies an executor of his estate, and from 1912 to 1920 Kuhn was one of Quinn's art advisors.

Bliss and Quinn enjoyed a cordial relationship. Both began collecting in their 40s, and before becoming impassioned collectors each had great abiding outside cultural interests: Quinn in Irish literature and Bliss in music and theater. Quinn was a complex personality; he was a competitive, often cunning collector with avant-garde taste, and a workaholic curmudgeon, not known for his warmth. He did not confer praise easily. However, his admiration for Bliss, who convinced him to lend to a Cézanne exhibition in 1917 at the Arden Gallery in New York, is evident in a letter he sent to her in February of the same year: "I am glad I was able to contribute in a small way to the success of the Cézanne exhibition. I thought your Cézannes were lovely, and they were among the best, if not the best in the exhibition."[19]

The next year, when a large selection of Davies's paintings owned by Bliss were exhibited at the Macbeth Gallery, Quinn again congratulated her:

> You have done a wonderfully fine thing in assembling this unique collection of Davies's work. Outside of very large rich men, like Rockefeller and Carnegie, who can do great things like founding universities and foundations and institutions for scientific research, it is seldom that people have the vision to conceive and the will to carry out a perfectly rounded thing. . . . I would rather have that vision and carry that work to completion than be Governor of the State of New York. So you have had the vision about Davies's work and . . . I congratulate you sincerely and heartily on it. As something of a collector myself, in many fields and perhaps too scattered to reach anything near perfection in any field, I can imagine the tremendous and enduring satisfaction that it must be to you to have got together this unique collection of Davies's work. It was a big and generous idea . . . to share . . . the collection with the public. . . . Therefore, as a fellow collector, I send you congratulations.[20]

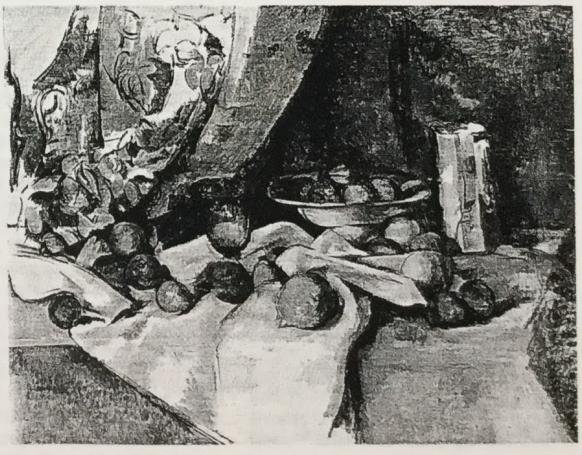
In 1921, Quinn and Bliss were among the collectors who urged Bryson Burroughs, the curator of paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to organize a loan exhibition of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, which opened to the public in September. The protests were scathing, and the fury of the press and of a self-appointed Committee of Citizens and Supporters of the museum was widely reported in New York. Quinn lent 26 works to the show, and Lillie, anonymously, lent 12, including five Cézannes.[21] The show was criticized as "dangerous," and Quinn was accused of masterminding the exhibition. In response to the uproar, Quinn denounced these criticisms as the Ku Klux Klan-inspired ravings of ignorant "lunatics." Bliss wrote a stirring letter to the well-known conservative American decorative designer and National Academy advocate Louis Comfort Tiffany, making her views known. An excerpt from the undated letter was published after her death in the catalogue of the memorial exhibition of her collection:

> We are not so far apart as you seem to think in our ideas on art, for I yield to no one in my love, reverence and admiration for the beautiful things which have already been created in painting, sculpture and music. But you are an artist absorbed in your own production with scant leisure and inclination to examine patiently and judge fairly the work of the hosts of revolutionists, innovators and modernists in this widespread movement through the whole domain of art or to discriminate between what is false and bad and what is sometimes crude, perhaps, but full of power and promise for the enrichment of the art which the majority of them serve with a devotion as pure and honest as your own. There are not yet many great men among them, but great men are scarce—even among academicians.
>
> The truth is you older men seem intolerant and supercilious, a state of mind incomprehensible to a philosopher who looks on and enjoys watching for and finding the new men in music, painting and literature who have something to say worth saying and claim for themselves only the freedom to express it in their own way, a claim which you have always maintained as your inalienable right.[22]

By 1916, Lillie began to buy with the eye of a connoisseur. Her increasing self-confidence is evident in her purchase of many bold paintings by Cézanne. At the time of her death she owned 26 of his works.

Quinn died in 1924; following his instructions, his collection was sold at auction over a two-year period to avoid financial catastrophe for his estate, the

Cézanne: **Still Life with Apples,** *1895-98, oil on canvas, 27 by 36½ inches. Museum of Modern Art.*



Abby Rockefeller, in May 1929, invited Bliss and several others to discuss founding a museum for modern art in New York. The group's efforts would result in the opening of the museum five months later.

taste of the time being very unsympathetic to modern art. Lillie purchased Redon's *Etruscan Vase* (1900-05) and Cézanne's *Rocks Near the Caves Above Le Château Noir*, formerly called *Rocky Ridge* (1895-1900), from the 1926 sale. She had privately acquired from the Quinn collection Gauguin's *Young Man with a Flower* (1891), a beautiful small oil that had once been owned by Matisse, from whom Quinn bought it.[23] The Quinn collection would have been an excellent foundation for a museum devoted to modern art, as Kuhn and Davies hoped. It is likely that they discussed this with others, including Lillie, who were also dismayed at its dispersal. The Quinn collection made such a profound impression on the young Alfred H. Barr, Jr., when he saw it at the memorial exhibition in January 1926, that during his tenure at the Museum of Modern Art, where he would become the founding director in 1929, he sought to acquire important Quinn pictures when they became available.[24]

Continuing as Davies's major patron, Lillie commissioned him in 1914 to paint a mural for the music room adjacent to her bedroom on the third floor of the family home. Since her mother disliked most modern art, it was rather daring of Lillie to have invited Davies to design and install his work in their house. Her mother preferred that only works by Cézanne (and occasionally the Prendergast brothers) be hung downstairs. Lillie kept the rest of her collection on the third floor. Lillie understood that for Davies this commission was important because he very much wanted to revive the practice of mural-making in America. He hoped that the mural would lead the way for other such projects to be awarded to modern artists rather than to academic ones.

Davies, along with Charles and Maurice Prendergast, was among those included in a mural exhibition at the Montross Gallery, in April 1915. With this exhibition, Montross aimed to establish cooperation between painters and architects, thus bridging the gap between modern American art and decorative interior design. Lillie must have been pleased by the idea of wall decorations because soon after the Davies work was in place, she commissioned a mural-size panel from the Prendergasts to go over a mantelpiece. *The Spirit of the Hunt* (ca. 1917) is a highly decorative, tapestrylike work in tempera, gold and silver leaf, and pencil on an incised gesso panel. Additionally, Bliss ordered a Prendergast panel for the front hall of Neil Bliss's home in Westbury and a hope chest by Charles Prendergast for her niece, Eliza. Lillie's interest in acquiring works by the Prendergasts continued through 1928. She would eventually purchase over 20 oil paintings, watercolors and drawings by Maurice, and a screen and seven carved, painted and gilded panels by Charles. Eliza Cobb recalled that when Bliss died there were "stacks and stacks" of Prendergast watercolors in her apartment; Bliss had supported the brothers in the early years by buying two of their watercolors a month.

By 1916, Lillie began to see and buy with the eye of a connoisseur. Her increasing self-confidence as a collector is evident in her purchase of bold works by Cézanne, the artist she especially admired. At the time of her death she owned 26 of his works, many of them now considered pivotal to an understanding of his oeuvre. In January 1916, she acquired eight of the 17 watercolors in the Montross Gallery's Cézanne exhibition, in addition to an oil painting, *Bottle of Liqueur*, previously known as *Fruit and Wine* (ca. 1890). The works in this show, which attracted the favorable attention of artists, were selected by the French critic Felix Fénéon. Among the watercolors on view, Lillie bought the magnificent *House Among Trees* (ca. 1900) and *Foliage* (1895). Lillie was unconcerned that the reviews were less than sympathetic during the time it was on display since reviews, positive or negative, did not influence her purchases. Eleanor Belmont wrote:

> Criticism, even ridicule of an artist's method, or the result achieved had no effect upon her whatsoever: she smiled confidently at those who had nothing in common with her beliefs and went her serene, cheerful way. Just as a rock at the ocean's edge meets the pounding of the teasing surf, after each attack the rock emerges unchanged—it is the wave which breaks and leaves the rock gleaming in the sunlight as bright as before.[25]

Lillie's enthusiasm for Cézanne's work never wavered. Between 1920 and 1926, she purchased six more of his paintings through Marius de Zayas, a Mexican artist turned dealer who had learned the art business as a protégé of Stieglitz: the large and important *Bather* (ca. 1885); *Pines and Rocks (Fontainebleau?)*, ca. 1896-1900; *Still Life with Ginger Jar, Sugar Bowl, and Oranges*, formerly called *Oranges* (1902-06); *Dominique Aubert, the Artist's Uncle*, formerly called *Man in a Blue Cap (Uncle Dominic)*, ca. 1866; and two small gems, *Pears and Knife* (1877-78) and *Carafe, Milk Can, Bowl and Orange*, formerly called *The Water Can* (1879-80).

Two notable Cézannes in Lillie's collection were purchased at the 1922 auction of modern paintings privately owned by Kelekian that took place at New York's Plaza Hotel. Many of the bids were disappointing, and Kelekian, with Quinn acting on his behalf, had to buy back a number of the offerings. Lillie paid $21,000 for *Still Life with Apples* (1895-98), the highest price paid at the sale.[26] It was her most expensive purchase to date, and Lillie was adventurous to buy it, since it was considered to be unfinished. This painting was one of her favorite works, and is today a major work of the Museum of Modern Art. She also purchased Cézanne's *Portrait of Madame Cézanne* (1883-85). Both were originally owned by Ambroise Vollard, the eminent French art dealer, publisher and entrepreneur, and had been lent anonymously by Kelekian to the 1921 Metropolitan exhibition. Both have impeccable provenances; Lillie bought what she loved but was mindful of the good taste of respected prior owners. On Jan. 11, 1929, she acquired the final work Cézanne collection from Durand-Ruel: *Port Victor Chocquet Seated*, previously titled *Ch in an Arm Chair*, an oil of 1877.

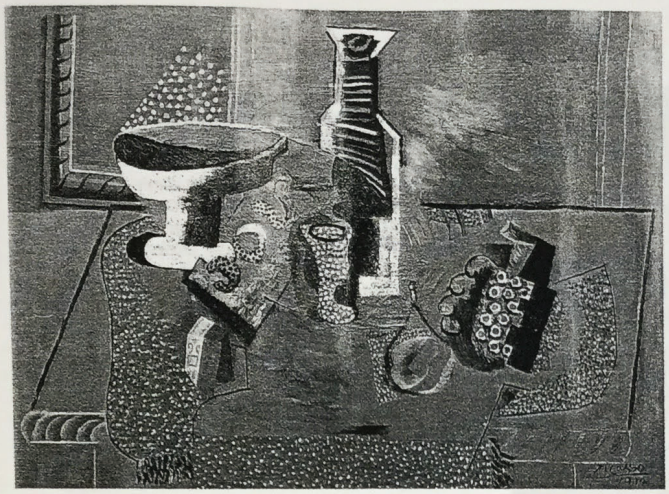
Bliss also acquired works by other art Cézanne's generation. Sometime before 192 bought, through the Bourgeois Gallery in New Gauguin's *The Moon and the Earth* [Hino Te F 1893.[27] This painting was so reviled by critics 1921 Metropolitan Museum show that it hac illustrated in *The World* as typical of the Bolshevist" work included. From the Degas s April 1919, she added six drawings by Degas collection, five of which are copies the artist m old-master drawings.

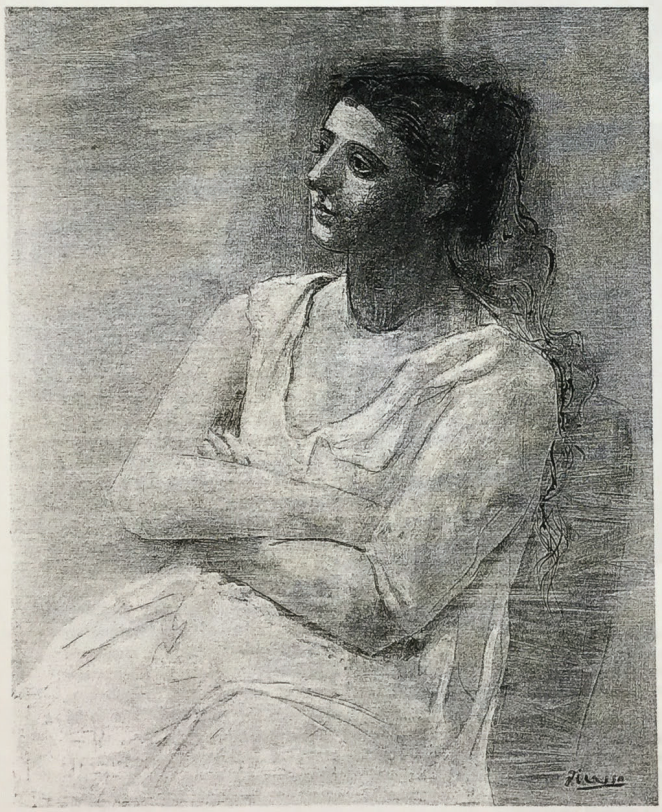
From the 1922 Kelekian sale Lillie also purc her first painting by Picasso, *Green Still Life* (she already owned a dozen of his works on *Green Still Life* is a subtle, brilliantly colored, picture, quite unlike the artist's nearly mon matic works of 1910-12, and an appropriate for Lillie who, like many collectors of the shunned abstraction. Quinn, in describing Bli letter of 1922 to the French dealer L Rosenberg, wrote: "She has bought very hea the work of an American artist, Arthur B. D and others. She has been a rather heavy pur of works by Cézanne lately. She would not be ested in cubist works at all. I know her well."[28]

Bliss's final period of collecting began a 1927. Davies was living abroad, and sh entered her 60s feeling confident and indepe By this time, visitors were asking to see her tion and museums were borrowing her pic Matisse, in the U.S. for negotiations regardi Barnes mural, visited her in late Septembe before returning to France. Whereas the w Cézanne had previously been the center attention, the work of Seurat would be the focus of her collecting activities during these y

She made annual trips to Europe from through 1929, and while in London in the sum 1927, she saw two paintings at the Knoedler G that she subsequently bought through the New branch: Seurat's *Port-en-Bessin, Entrance Harbor* (1889), and Daumier's *The Laun* (1861). (She preferred to purchase works th New York dealers.) The most complete of the versions Daumier painted of the subject *Laundress* is the only one dated and, once had an impeccable provenance, having been e ed at the 1861 Paris Salon and illustrated i *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in June 1878 and in on the artist that were published in France ir and 1908. To her single Seurat painting Lillie add, in 1929, a large group of drawings by the When she bought them, these works were al considered rare and special. *Woman Sewing* 83) and *At the Concert Européen* (ca. 1887) conté crayon, were done as independent cor tions, not as sketches for paintings.

While in London, Bliss also visited the L Galleries. Ernest Lefèvre wrote John Kraush New York on July 19, 1927: "Miss Bliss did not back to see the Cézanne and I am afraid sh already left the hotel when my letter ar there."[29] Lefèvre and Kraushaar were close bu associates and good friends who shared clients.





Of the two major Picassos in the Bliss bequest, Green Still Life, *1914 (top, 23¼ by 31¼ inches), remains in the Museum of Modern Art's collection, while* Woman in White, *1923 (above, 39 by 31¼ inches), was sold to the Metropolitan Museum in 1947.*

Bliss's return to New York she acquired three paintings from Kraushaar, all of which came to him from Lefèvre: Picasso's *Woman in White* (1923), Matisse's *Interior with a Violin Case* (1918-19) and Toulouse-Lautrec's *May Belfort as a Kate Greenaway Baby*, formerly titled *May Belfort in Pink* (1895). Her check to Kraushaar was accompanied by her calling card on which she wrote: "Dear Mr. Kraushaar. Enclosed please find a check for $2500—on account—Yours truly, /s/ L. P. Bliss."[30] She frequently sent rounded sums, occasionally paying long after purchases had occurred.

Her last major purchases in 1928 and 1929, in addition to the Seurats, were from the New York dealer Valentine Dudensing, who in the late 1920s employed the services of the young Pierre Matisse, son of the artist. From October 1928 through October 1929, Bliss bought two paintings by André Derain, *The Farm* (1922-24) and *Landscape, Southern France* (1927-28); Henri Rousseau's *Jungle with a Lion* (1904-10); Matisse's *Girl in Green* (ca. 1921); and Amedeo Modigliani's *Anna Zborowska* (1917). Her bill for all totaled $49,000.

In October 1928, Bliss moved from her house on 37th Street, where there was insufficient light and space to properly hang and show her collection. Since her mother had died five years earlier, she was free to sell the house, move, travel and live as she pleased. She contracted to purchase an apartment in a building being erected at 1001 Park Avenue on the northeast corner at 84th Street. Plans were resolved by July 1929, and in October Bliss moved into an 18-room 11,500-square-foot triplex penthouse with very high ceilings on the 13th, 14th and 15th floors.[31] The "Music Room," as she called it, was in fact a double-storied 20-foot-high spacious gallery, a skylit room 43 feet long and 26 feet wide, with a specially designed lighting system. Over the fireplace hung Cézanne's *Bather*, with Daumier's *Laundress* and Cézanne's *Chocquet* on either side. Other walls were dominated by Modigliani's *Anna Zborowska*, Picasso's *Woman in White* and Cézanne's *Pines and Rocks*. Cézanne's *Still Life with Apples* was placed above a large grand piano. Lillie finally had the space to hang her three favorite works, the Daumier and the Cézanne *Apples* and *Pines and Rocks*, in one space.

The decor of this area of her apartment reflected an independent-minded woman in touch with her time. The furniture and rugs were custom designed by Jules Bouy, a Frenchman who had come to New York around the time of World War I, in the "art moderne" style that had recently become available to fashion-conscious New Yorkers. The furniture and the flat, ornamental setbacks at the sides of the fireplace mantel were characteristic of Bouy's work and evoke the Art Deco urban architecture of this period. The chairs and sofa were slipcovered and the furniture inlaid and painted. On a freestanding center console sat two small sculptures—a Maillol crouching woman and what appears in photos to be an archaic style Greek figure. Abby Rockefeller, who had begun buying modern works in 1924 and was designing a private gallery space in her own home at this time, wrote to a friend: "Very confidentially I feel that Miss Bliss's gallery, which has lots of lovely pictures, is also full of small elephants in the way of furniture. It all looks so big and clumsy to me."[32] Lillie's boldness was lost on

Abby; others, however, thought it unforgettably grand. The rest of the apartment was furnished in a traditional style. The top floor was planned as a separate apartment for the use of the Walter Hampden family when they were in town.

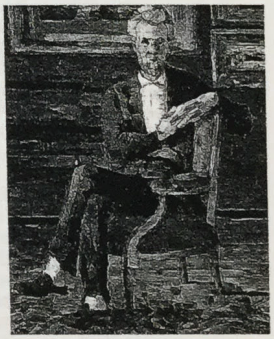
Each room was dominated by Lillie's collection: Cézanne watercolors and Seurat drawings in the entrance foyer and reception room; lithographs by Renoir, Redon, Matisse and Davies, woodcuts by Gauguin, etchings by Picasso and fragments of Coptic and Persian textiles along the corridors. Although Bliss was Davies's principal patron, and she owned hundreds of his works, the only examples hanging in her apartment at the time of her death, aside from a few works on paper in the halls, were three oils and the murals moved from 37th Street, which decorated a small room, proof enough that, although she valued their great friendship and was indebted to him for his advice, she did not exaggerate his artistic importance.

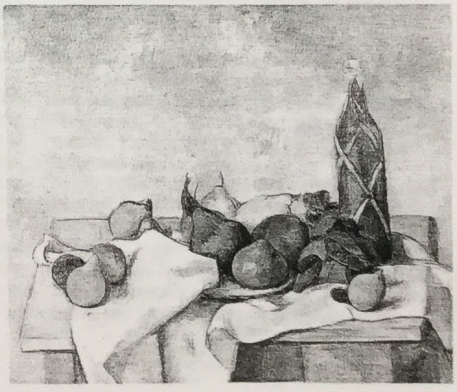
Arthur B. Davies died suddenly in Italy on Oct. 23, 1928. Commemorative exhibitions were held during the next two years in several venues, and Lillie lent generously to all of them. In April 1929, Davies's collection was sold at auction, Lillie and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller being among the buyers, and Abby had a Davies show in her new private gallery in her house. Abby had known Davies for only a few years, but she credited him with encouraging her to acquire modern art, from 1924 on. Davies's death, and the sale of his collections not long after the dispersal of the Quinn collection, combined with the steadfast reluctance of the Metropolitan Museum to regularly show and support late 19th- and 20th-century art, made the time ripe to seriously consider establishing an institution dedicated to exhibiting modern art in New York.

At the end of May 1929, Abby invited Lillie, their mutual friend Mary Quinn Sullivan (no relation to John Quinn) and A. Conger Goodyear to her home to discuss founding a museum for modern art in New York.[33] Mary Sullivan was an art teacher, dealer and collector. Goodyear was a collector of modern art and a former board member at the Albright Gallery in Buffalo; he agreed to head the venture and became chairman. His presence at the meeting was apparently due to Walt Kuhn, who, in a letter of July 9, 1929, to his wife, Vera, took credit for the fact that Goodyear was made chairman of this exploratory committee. Lillie, the leading collector among them, became vice president; Abby, the truly wealthy one, was appointed treasurer. A short time later three more persons were asked to join them: Paul J. Sachs, an eminent art history professor at Harvard, also a collector and an acquaintance of Abby; Frank Crowninshield, a publisher and friend of Lillie; and Mrs. W. Murray Crane, a friend of both women. As a group, they had the knowledge, resources, dedication, status and efficiency that would result in the museum's opening to the public five months later.

Kuhn and Bliss met frequently during the summer of 1929 and discussed details of the new museum. On July 12, Kuhn wrote to his wife: "Miss Bliss phoned yesterday. Evidently the $$ are coming in good order for the future. I surely had a lucky break in the Goodyear business. It means that at last I will have a show under the swellest and best advertised conditions sometime or other."[34] Bliss had gotten to

The Starry Night *was acquired by MOMA in 1941 in an even exchange for two Cézannes and a Toulouse-Lautrec.*





Top, Vincent van Gogh:* The Starry Night, *1889, oil on canvas, 29 by 36¼ inches. Museum of Modern Art.

Above left, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec:* May Belfort as a Kate Greenaway Baby, *1895, gouache on board, 24⅞ by 19 inches. Cleveland Museum of Art.

Above right, Cézanne:* Portrait of Victor Chocquet Seated, *ca. 1877, oil on canvas, 18 by 15 inches. Columbus Museum of Art.

Right, Cézanne:* Bottle of Liqueur, *ca. 1890, oil on canvas, 21½ by 25⅞ inches. Private collection, Japan.

know Kuhn well since the Armory Show, and she owned dozens of paintings by him. She bought his *Jeanette* (1928) in 1929, for which he asked $2,500; she said he was mistaken and sent him a check for $3,000 instead.[35]

That summer, Lillie spent a few weeks with her good friend, the concert pianist and teacher Olga Samaroff Stokowski, at her home in Maine. Olga later recalled:

> I never ceased to marvel at the quiet and unobtrusive way in which she managed to be of great service to the arts without ever seeking the limelight for herself. . . . During her visit in Seal Harbor she and my summer neighbor, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., were engrossed in plans for the new Museum of Modern Art in New York.[36]

That same summer Goodyear went abroad to borrow works for the museum's inaugural exhibition, while Crowninshield remained in New York to work out the logistics. They regularly communicated with Lillie and Abby, and it is clear that the women's preferences were respected: they insisted on a French show, not the Ryder-Homer-Eakins exhibition proposed by the men. Abby and Lillie were a team. Naturally generous in spirit and outlook, they were, in a most agreeable way, accustomed to getting what they wanted. They were actively involved in all aspects of the new venture. Crowninshield wired Goodyear: "Rockefeller Bliss approve such an expenditure; . . . [Mrs. Rockefeller] and Miss Bliss think sum of $15,000 is maximum for structural charges."[37] Bliss wrote Goodyear explaining that she believed that they must secure $75,000 before launching the venture. Kuhn reiterated this in a letter to his wife dated July 19, 1929: "Here's the dope on the new gallery. Miss Bliss came to the apartment this P.M.—They have $60,000 collected so far, only want 15 more—or 75,000 to go ahead."[38] Concurrently, in a letter to Goodyear full of details about a dinner they were arranging, Lillie wrote: "Sorry to bother you but Vice-Presidents are always bothersome."[39]

On Nov. 8, 1929, the museum opened to the public in the Heckscher Building at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street with an exhibition titled "Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh" and was an instant success. Eight Bliss pictures were included in this inaugural show.

Lillie acquired no major works after the museum opened. Barr believed that she wanted to add an important Seurat figure composition and a painting by Vincent van Gogh to her collection.[40] She sold paintings and saved money by altering her lifestyle in order to buy a van Gogh, but she never did. Eliza Cobb recalled that although Lillie had a substantial household staff, in the summer of 1930 she paid all but one of them half wages and lived alone in the large apartment with the laundress and the chauffeur, visiting Neil's family in Westbury, Long Island, on weekends. "And all of this was because she put her money into pictures and into the modern art museum."[41] Additionally, her resources had been diverted from art to charity: the Depression had set in, and Lillie was concerned with the unemployed; her will included a $50,000 bequest to the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. Perhaps she also had fewer funds available due to the deflated stock market.

In July 1930, Lillie became ill, was operated on for cancer, seemed to be recuperating and was optimistic about the future. One of her last ventures outside her home was to visit the museum's "Toulouse-Lautrec/Redon" exhibition on the day it closed, Mar. 2, 1931.[42] Her three Redons and her Toulouse-Lautrec oil were on view. It is not difficult to imagine the 29-year-old Alfred Barr showing her through the galleries. Barr and Bliss saw each other often during the short time they were acquainted, and they had much in common. Like her, he deeply loved music; they went to the movies and attended concerts together. Eleanor Belmont recalled that Bliss was attracted to youth. "She saw what they saw, encouraged the expression of their ideas and spontaneously offered them unprejudiced consideration."[43] Certainly Lillie must have greatly respected Barr's brilliance and enthusiasm; after all, she planned to leave her collection in his charge.

Unfortunately, however, their relationship would never mature, as did that of Barr and Abby Rockefeller, because 10 days later, on Mar. 12, Lillie died. Neil and Eliza were at her bedside. A private memorial service was held in the Music Room of her apartment, and Walter Hampden, who at the time was appearing in New York, delivered the eulogy to a room crowded with friends. When the contents of her will became known, both Abby Rockefeller and Goodyear were very surprised: she had not previously informed them of her decision to leave to the museum the most important works in her collection. Kuhn apparently had an inkling of her intention when he wrote to his wife on July 19, 1929: "Her whole collection will no doubt go to the new museum, which is certainly looming up big."[44]

In bequeathing her art to the museum before its first anniversary, Bliss had secretly decided what form her support would take. Her will required the museum to raise an endowment to make her gift a reality.

Lillie Bliss could not afford to support the museum financially in the same way as Abby Rockefeller. However, in bequeathing her collection to the museum three months before its first anniversary, she had quietly and secretly decided what form her support would take. Her will stipulated, however, that the Museum of Modern Art would have to raise an endowment to make her gift a reality.[45]

Specifically, the will stated that the works cited in her bequest would become "the absolute property" of the museum once it had been established "to the full and complete satisfaction" of the trustees of her estate that the museum was "sufficiently endowed . . . on a firm financial basis and in the hands of a competent board." She also stipulated that two of her Cézannes—*Still Life with Ginger Jar, Sugar Bowl, and Oranges* and *Still Life with Apples*—and her Daumier *Laundress* could never be sold or otherwise disposed of, and that if the Modern did not want them, they "would become the property of the Metropolitan Museum of Art."[46] The Cézannes remain at the Modern and the Daumier went to the Met in 1947.[47]

Bliss's entire collection was valued at $1,139,036 at the time of her death. The Ferargil Galleries of New York prepared an inventory of the contents of the Park Avenue apartment and did the appraisals: the four pictures with the highest values were three Cézannes—*Bather* ($60,000), *Still Life with Apples* ($50,000) and *Pines and Rocks* ($40,000)—and the Degas *Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills* ($40,000). Abby Rockefeller wrote to Neil Bliss that Lillie's gesture was "so in line with the generous way in which she did all things that it will make her memory a very living inspiration to us all. It makes me more eager than ever to see the museum worthily succeed."[48]

Two months after her death, the 12th exhibition held by the Museum of Modern Art, from May 13 to Oct. 6, 1931, was a "Memorial Exhibition: The Collection of the Late Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, Vice-President of the Museum." Works by 24 artists were selected, and a small catalogue was issued. By the time the show closed, 32,144 people had seen it. The public opening was preceded by a memorial service held in the galleries and attended by 300 guests.

From 1931 through 1934, the museum's trustees and its director were preoccupied with raising funds to meet the challenge of the Bliss bequest. The matter of a permanent collection was foremost on their minds. One of the fundamental purposes of establishing the museum, Barr argued, was to have on continuing display works by the masters of the past 50 years. He cautioned that if the museum did not establish a permanent collection policy, it might as well change its name from Museum of Modern Art to Exhibition Gallery.

In March 1934, the trustees met the financial terms of the Bliss will, her bequest was accessioned and a Museum of Modern Art with a permanent collection became a reality. In order for the museum to secure the bequest, the estate required that the museum raise $1 million.[49] However, because of the difficulty of raising funds during the Depression, this initial sum was reduced to $600,000. The money came from several sources: Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, $200,000 (given to her by her husband for this purpose); the Carnegie Foundation, $100,000; the other trustees, $200,000; and an anonymous donor, $100,000. The anonymous donor was Abby's son, Nelson A. Rockefeller, who would later become very active in the museum. He made the donation because he wanted his mother to know that someone in the family besides herself was deeply supportive of the new museum. He told his mother of his gift two months later.

Two years after the museum had moved to its new quarters, a limestone town house at 11 West 53rd Street, the Bliss bequest was shown in its entirety. From May 14 to Sept. 12, 1934, the exhibition was seen by 30,445 people.

The Lillie P. Bliss bequest ensured that the museum had a foundation upon which to build its future. Her action reflected her confidence in her friends to secure the endowment and in Alfred Barr to make her dream come true. Her courage and intelligence are reflected in the paintings she left to the public. The most important works in

her collection are the French paintings and drawings from the latter part of the 19th century by artists whose present fame has overcome the neglect or derision which they often endured during their lifetimes: Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, Redon, Seurat and Toulouse-Lautrec. In this alone, her courage has been vindicated. Her support of American artists of the time is also noteworthy for, at her death, she owned more works by contemporary American artists than by any others: predominantly Davies, Kuhn and the Prendergasts.

In 1931, two months after Lillie's death, Eleanor Belmont wrote:

> She was an advocate for modern art when it had few admirers, a patron when it had almost no market; finally through her keen intelligence, valiant championing of young artists, and her personal experience with their work, she became not only an important collector but one of the best judges of contemporary painting in this country. To gather that which has stood the test of time takes skill and taste, but to select wisely from the vast amount of unweeded material produced by contemporary artists, requires taste, courage, and insight that amount almost to the gift of prophecy.[50]

Bliss acquired boldly and she bequeathed what she thought best, thus giving a permanent collection to a public institution that she helped to found. The collection of the Museum of Modern Art today is a living example of her noble legacy. □

1. Picasso was notified of the sale of the *Demoiselles* to the museum in a letter of Dec. 10, 1937, from César de Hauke of the Seligmann Gallery in New York, but it would take two years to complete the financial arrangements; the museum publicly announced the acquisition in January 1939. For details on this transaction, see Judith Cousins and Hélène Seckel, "Chronology of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907-1939" in *Studies in Modern Art*, no. 3, John Elderfield, ed., New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1994, pp. 199-202. The Degas, now titled *Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills* (1884), is in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. A payment of $28,000 in 1939 equals about $364,600 today.
2. Isabella Stewart Gardner is not included in this group because her interest in art centered mainly on the old masters. Although she agreed to be listed as a vice president of the Armory Show in 1913, she did not collect work by artists included in the show. Two of the Matisses in the Gardner Museum, for example, were given to her. Among her contemporaries, she was most interested in the work of John Singer Sargent, one of the most accepted artists of the time, in addition to that of James McNeill Whistler and Anders Zorn. She was born almost 25 years before Bliss and died in 1924, one year before Sargent.
3. Gwendoline (1882-1951) and Margaret (1884-1963) Davies, of Llandiman, Wales, began buying French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings in 1912, and by 1920 they had assembled one of the most impressive and important collections of its kind in Great Britain. Their activities influenced other collectors in Britain, notably Samuel Courtauld, who acknowledged their importance. By 1924, having amassed over 200 works, the sisters stopped actively acquiring. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to donate works to museums in London, they bequeathed the entire collection to the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, where it can be seen today.
4. Eleanor Belmont in *Memorial Exhibition: The Collection of the Late Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, Vice-President of the Museum. May 17-September 27, 1931.* New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1931, p. 8. (Subsequently called *Bliss 1931*)
5. Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson (later Cobb), Archives of American Art, oral history interview by Paul Cummings, Jan. 3, 1978. The author spoke with Cobb on many occasions from 1987 to 1991 and more recently with members of the family. (Subsequently called AAA: Oral History)
6. Lillie P. Bliss to Eleanor Belmont, Oct. 17, 1930. Belmont Papers, Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
7. Lillie was a founder of the Walter Hampden Theater enterprise, and those who worked with her on its establishment admired her "exquisite dealing with difficult situations, her tact, and her patience." MOMA Archives, Bliss Scrapbook, Claude Bragdon to Cornelius N. Bliss, Mar. 13, 1931. Bliss's letters to Walter Hampden are filled with insights about the theater and reveal a thorough knowledge of literature. The author thanks Raymond Wemmlinger, archivist, The Players Club, New York, for providing access to the Hampden Papers.
8. Author's meeting with Paul Hampden in Connecticut, Mar. 28, 2002, and subsequent conversations.
9. Lillie Bliss to Walter Hampden [Oct. 8, 1923] Hampden Booth Theater Library, The Players Club, Box #30.
10. Bliss to Hampden, Aug. 2 [1924], Box #7.
11. AAA: Oral History, p. 28.
12. AAA: Oral History, p. 3.
13. I am grateful to Nanette R. Kelekian for sharing reminiscences and papers concerning her grandfather, Dikran G. Kelekian, and her father, Charles Kelekian, with whom she managed the gallery until it closed in 1988. Lillie's interest in Persian art continued throughout her life.
14. Paul Rosenberg, "American Painting," *Dial* 71, December 1921, p. 655.
15. *Bliss 1931*, p. 7.
16. Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*, New York, Holt, 2000, p. 102.
17. This $20,000 paid in 1913 would equal around $364,000 in today's dollars, a multiple of about 18.
18. See "Catalogue Raisonné," in Milton Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show*, New York, Abbeville, 1988, p. 254.
19. New York Public Library, John Quinn Letter Box #14, sheet 431.
20. NYPL, Quinn Box #17, sheet 898.
21. See Rebecca A. Rabinow, "Modern Art Comes to the Metropolitan," *Apollo*, October 2000; the appendix, pp. 9-12, is a checklist of the 1921 Metropolitan exhibition.
22. *Bliss 1931*, p. 3.
23. AAA: Jacques Seligmann papers, Box 50: correspondence. My thanks to Judith Throm for her assistance in this and other matters.
24. In January 1926, Barr was a graduate school preceptor at Princeton. While he was director (1929-43) and director of the museum collections (1947-67) at the Museum of Modern Art, many Quinn works entered the collection, including Rousseau's *Sleeping Gypsy*, Matisse's *Still Life after de Heem* and Picasso's *Three Women at the Spring*. Casts or versions of three of Quinn's Brancusi sculptures were acquired through the Bliss bequest.
25. *Bliss 1931*, p. 8.
26. Throughout the 1920s, the multiple for today's dollar is a little over ten, $21,000 in 1922 being worth around $226,000.
27. This painting was acquired by Paul Rosenberg from the first estate sale of works owned by Degas held in Paris in 1918. De Záyas lent it anonymously to the 1921 Metropolitan exhibition.
28. NYPL, Quinn Box #25, sheet 110.
29. AAA: Kraushaar Gallery Papers; incoming letters; Alex Reed & Lefèvre Ltd., 1927, unfilmed.
30. AAA: Kraushaar Gallery Papers; incoming letters: Be-Br 1928, unfilmed.
31. Plans generously made available by Christopher Gray, director of the Office for Metropolitan History in New York.

From 1931 to '34, funds were raised to fulfill the challenge of Bliss's bequest. In 1934, the works were accessioned, and a Museum of Modern Art with a permanent collection became a reality.

32. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller to William Valentiner, Aug. 23, 1930. Rockefeller Archive Center, Rockefeller Family Archives, RG2, Office of Messrs R; AAR Series: Sub-series 1 Correspondence, Box #5, folder 74.
33. During February and March of 1929, Lillie was traveling in the Mediterranean and Middle East with her niece and brother. On Mar. 7, when they were disembarking in Haifa, they met Abby and John Rockefeller, who invited them to join their party for lunch. Although the subject of establishing a museum for modern art might have come up, as has been conjectured, it is unlikely, with so many present, that a detailed discussion occurred. After lunch both parties continued their separate ways. However, Abby would have had lots of time to discuss the matter with Mary Sullivan when they met aboard ship on Abby's return trip to New York.
34. AAA: Walt Kuhn Papers, D240.
35. MOMA Archives, Registrar Papers, #34b.
36. Olga Samaroff Stowkowski, *An American Musician's Story*, New York, Norton, 1939, p. 251.
37. MOMA Archives, A. Conger Goodyear Scrapbook #1. (Subsequently called ACG Scrapbook)
38. AAA: Kuhn Papers, D240.
39. MOMA Archives, Bliss Scrapbook, Lillie P. Bliss to A. Conger Goodyear, undated.
40. *Bliss 1931*, p. 12.
41. AAA: Oral History, p. 27.
42. *Bliss 1931*, p. 9.
43. Ibid., p. 9.
44. AAA: Kuhn Papers, D240.
45. In 1917, Congress enacted the first legislation providing for the deductibility of charitable contributions to educational institutions by individuals for federal income tax purposes. Section 403(a) of the Revenue Act of 1918 provided that the net value of an estate be determined by deducting the value of the bequest from the gross estate.
46. Bliss will, MOMA Archives, ACG Scrapbook #10.
47. For an explanation of why and how Bliss pictures (including Picasso's *Woman in White*, Cézanne's *Dominique Aubert, the Artist's Uncle* and several Seurat drawings) were sold by the Museum of Modern Art to the Metropolitan Museum, see Kirk Varnedoe, "The Evolving Torpedo: Changing Ideas of the Collection of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art," *Studies in Modern Art*, no. 5, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1995, pp. 12-73.
48. MOMA Archives, Bliss Scrapbook, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller to Cornelius N. Bliss, Apr. 20, 1931.
49. $1 million in 1934 would be equivalent to around $13,514,000 today.
50. *Bliss 1931*, pp.7-8.

The author thanks Michelle Yun, Claire Henry and Michelle Elligott from the MOMA staff for their assistance.

Author: *Rona Roob is the former chief archivist of the Museum of Modern Art.*

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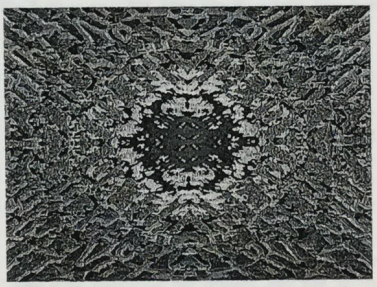

Cover: Bruce Pearson, *A Dangerous Game of Love and Faith* (detail), 2002, oil and acrylic on Styrofoam, 6 by 7½ feet. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York. See article beginning on page 130.

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PATRONS

A Noble Legacy

Soon after the Museum of Modern Art in York was founded, the bequest of Lillie P. Bliss (1864-1931) played a crucial role in establishing a permanent collection for the fledgling institution.

BY RONA ROOB

The heart of the Museum of Modern Art has long been its unrivaled collection of painting and sculpture. The collection's original core was the gift of one of the museum's founders, Lillie P. Bliss. When the Modern opened its temporary facility in Queens, it was a joy to find that three icons of the collection, Cézanne's *Bather*, Picasso's *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, were on view. All were acquired directly or indirectly through the bequest of Lillie Bliss, one of the least-known collectors of her generation.

In August 1930, nine months after the museum opened, Bliss executed her will, giving the cream of her holdings to the new museum. Her action, known only to her brother, affirmed her belief in an institution whose own foundations were not yet secure. The terms of her will were imaginative and generous: they allowed the museum to sell or exchange works from her collection to make other needed acquisitions; for example, *Les Demoiselles* was acquired in 1939 through the sale of a Degas oil for $18,000, plus an additional $10,000 in cash.[1] Her will set a standard for the future upon which others would build. When Bliss died less than a year later, in March 1931, her collection, which included masterpieces by Seurat, Gauguin, Matisse and Picasso, in addition to one of the most important privately held groups of Cézannes in America at that time, guaranteed the museum's future. Indeed, Lillie Bliss did nothing less than ensure that a museum devoted to modern art would exist in New York.

Bliss was one of a group of enlightened patrons whose vision revolutionized art collecting during the early 20th century. Several of them are known through institutions that bear their names: Albert C. Barnes, Duncan Phillips, Helene Kröller-Müller, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, Solomon R. Guggenheim, Peggy Guggenheim.[2] However, there are others, less known and many of them women, such as Katherine Dreier, Galka Scheyer, the Cone sisters in Baltimore, and the Davies sisters in Wales,[3] who, like Bliss, were instrumental in paving the way for the appreciation of modern art. Although the products of different backgrounds and communities, all these collectors had several important things in common: they were born into the Victorian age; their activities bridged a transition into the modern era; and they combined a love of collecting, a passion for modern art and an interest in new ideas. They acquired the advanced art of the time for their personal satisfaction, and when their activity became known, they helped to create an environment receptive to modern art. Now, in a time of intense curiosity about collections and collectors, it is remarkable that Bliss is mostly forgotten. As an accomplished pianist and would-be playwright, she understood the artistic temperament, and was an informed and ardent patron of music and the theater. But for more than two decades, from 1909 to 1931, art was her passion. She believed in the artists she befriended and supported them by buying their work; following their lead, she boldly collected work by other artists whom they brought to her attention, notably Cézanne and Seurat.

Lillie P. Bliss, ca. 1924. Bliss Family papers, New York.

A woman of privilege who never married, Lillie Bliss cherished her privacy. She was rarely photographed, but we know she was of medium height, slightly plump, with a fair complexion and crystal-clear blue eyes. She dressed conservatively, wore little makeup and was unpretentious. She did not care about the latest couture fashions and preferred antique jewelry. She was not a strong physical presence and did not stand out in a crowd. Among friends, she was outgoing, pleasant and full of enthusiasm for what she was doing. A close friend described her:

> In manner she was quiet, somewhat unimpressive, yet always alert and at moments of which she was unconscious one caught the vision of a radiant spirit. Apparently the gentlest, and certainly the most modest of women, she was absolutely independent in her taste and courageous as to her method of doing things. Having an instinctive love of the arts and a finely trained aesthetic perception she wove a pattern of brilliant color into the stereotype background of a conventional life.[4]

Lillie left very few records in her own hand, either about personal relationships or her collecting activities. She wrote prolifically only to friends who were away or when she was out of town, and she requested that her papers be destroyed upon her death. However, it is possible to know and understand her as a person and as a collector through the letters that remain, through her involvement in events of her time and through other people's observations.

One of these people was her niece, Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson Cobb (1907-2001).[5] Following Lillie's wishes, Eliza and her father, Lillie's brother Cornelius, burned Lillie's papers in the fireplace. Eliza Cobb later said that had her father not been there, she might have saved them or at least read them. She was very close to Lillie and spoke of her aunt warmly as a patient and loving person who adored her and her brothers. The closeness of the Bliss family was central to Lillie's stable "life full of happiness," as she wrote to her brother the year before she died.

We also know her through her friends in the music and theater worlds. One of the closest was the multitalented Eleanor Belmont, with whom Lillie shared many interests. Belmont, one of the most generous patrons of the Metropolitan Opera and the originator of its Opera Guild, was in addition an indefatigable fund-raiser for victims of World War I and the Depression. She was also a writer, and she gave up an illustrious career as an actress—George Bernard Shaw wrote *Major Barbara* for her—when she married the wealthy and powerful August Belmont who, among other interests, owned the IRT subway in New York and Belmont Raceway. Eleanor traveled, and Lillie kept her up-to-date on events in New York. In early 1930, Lillie wrote that the Modern Museum was flourishing and gave her a "gorgeous thrill and pleasure." Lillie's wide-ranging interests are apparent in these letters: unemployment, "crumbling stocks which never strike bottom," the museum, and what was happening in music and the theater. "If I attempted to write down a day's doings it would sound like one of [James] Joyce's most disconnected pages—minus the squalor, I hope!"[6]

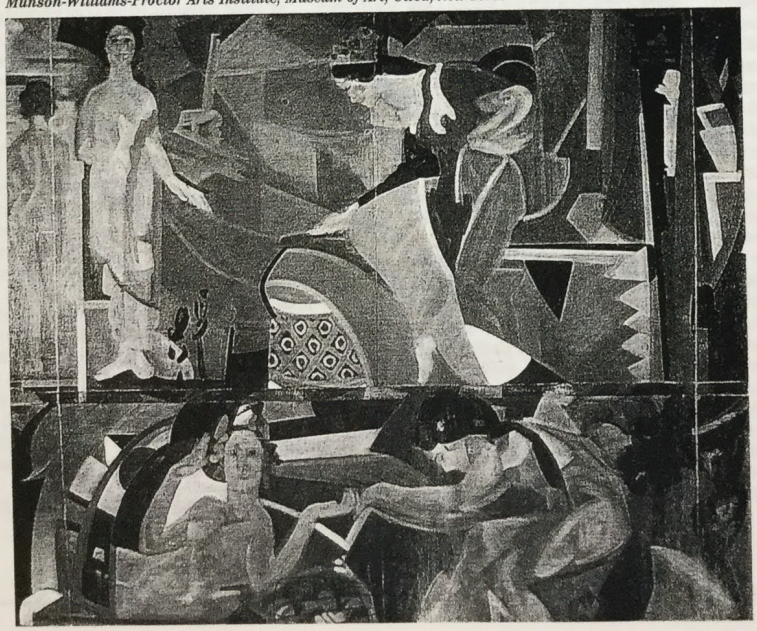
Another friend was the actor Walter Hampden, whom Lillie met in the early 1920s. His *Cyrano* and *Hamlet* were the sensations of the theater world at that time.[7] According to Paul Hampden, the actor's son, on Nov. 20, 1923, Walter Hampden fell out of a tree in Act III of *Cyrano* and broke his heel. Lillie insisted that he and his family move from their hotel into her town house so he could be cared for properly. The Hampdens continued to live with Lillie when they were not on the road until her death in 1931. Paul Hampden described a very active household full of art—on walls, in boxes and in closets—with people coming and going and the telephone constantly ringing.[8] He also recalled that Lillie loved cars. She inherited three from her father and in 1925, with great excitement, traded a 1905 Rolls-Royce for the car of the day, a Pierce Arrow.

Bliss was Davies's major patron; he in turn helped shape her collection. And it was Davies who planted the idea in her that a permanent place for modern art should be established in New York.

Lillie, as she was always known to her family and friends, was born Lizzie Plummer Bliss in Fall River, Mass., on Apr. 11, 1864. She used the name Lizzie only when signing checks and her will. She was the younger of two daughters and the second of four children of Cornelius Newton Bliss (1833-1911) of Fall River and Mary Plummer Bliss (1836-1923) of Boston. Her older sister Nellie died in her tenth year when Lillie was seven years old, and a brother George, born 11 months after Lillie, died in infancy. Only Lillie and her brother Cornelius, Jr., 10 years younger than she and known as Neil, survived childhood. Her father, a successful textile merchant, moved the family to a six-story house at 29 East 37th Street in the Murray Hill section of New York when Lillie was two.

Maurice and Charles Prendergast: The Spirit of the Hunt, *ca. 1917, tempera, pencil, gold and silver leaf on gessoed panel, 55 by 81½ inches, commissioned by Bliss. Private collection, Washington, D.C.*

Arthur B. Davies: One of 13 panels from Bliss mural, ca. 1941, oil on canvas, 92 by 108 inches. Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, Museum of Art, Utica, New York.



The Blisses were comfortably affluent and politically influential. However, despite their prominence, the family lived outside the public eye. Cornelius Bliss was one of a coterie of Republican leaders who were in the forefront of party affairs for over a generation. He was treasurer of the Republican National Committee from 1892 to 1908, served as chairman of the New York State Republican Party, represented New York at Republican conventions, and refused offers to run for governor and mayor of New York on several occasions. He rejected William McKinley's offer to be his vice-presidential running mate in 1900 and supported the choice of Theodore Roosevelt, but he did accept the post of secretary of the interior in McKinley's first cabinet, serving from 1897 to 1899. During the time that her father worked in Washington, Lillie often acted as his hostess at his infrequent but lavish parties.

Until 1923, when her mother died, Lillie's life in New York centered around the family's house on 37th Street. As an adult she was responsible for her mother's care: after the tragedy of losing two children, her mother had increasingly become a homebound invalid. Lillie ran the house, did the shopping and took her mother on chauffeur-driven automobile rides in the afternoons. A week after her mother's death she wrote: "My mother has been the center of my life—without her I seem lost—so I must just wait with patience for the direction that will surely come."[9]

In New York, Lillie regularly attended concerts, went to the theater and frequented art galleries. Throughout her youth the emphasis at home was on music, and her love of music, both classical and contemporary, led her to support young pianists and opera students and to help found the Juilliard Music Foundation (now the Juilliard School). When she believed in someone's career or talent she supported them unequivocally and often anonymously. An avid reader, she was fluent in French and an accomplished pianist. In the early 1920s she worked on adapting Joseph Conrad's novel *The Rescue* for the stage, going so far as to contact Conrad's literary agent and to meet with publishers. She wrote Hampden in 1924, "I have spent a solid week, five to six hours a day, with '*The Rescuer*' [sic]. Finished typing it today at five o'clock and there is now a fair copy awaiting your pruning knife."[10] As Eliza Cobb recalled, Lillie was well informed and had a "tremendous life of the mind."[11]

The Bliss family's interest in music did not extend to art. One of Lillie's early connections with the visual arts was probably related to her father's membership in the Union League Club, of which Mr. Bliss was president from 1902 to 1906. It organized exhibitions of works by living artists, lent by members, artists and galleries such as Durand-Ruel and Knoedler; for example, in 1891, 34 works by Claude Monet were shown. These shows were publicly advertised, open to all and well attended.

However, it was her friendship with Christian Archibald Herter (1865-1910) that bridged the gap between music and art for Lillie. She and Herter shared a serious interest in music; he was as

The first masterwork purchased by MOMA through the Bliss bequest was Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, *acquired in 1939 for $28,000: $18,000 from the sale of a Degas oil, plus $10,000 in cash.*

Above, Edgar Degas:* Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills, *1884, oil on canvas, 18¼ by 21⅝ inches. Detroit Institute of Arts.

Right, Pablo Picasso:* Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, *1907, oil on canvas, 8 by 7 feet 8 inches. Museum of Modern Art.

accomplished a cellist as she was a pianist, but additionally, Herter was educated and interested in art, having been brought up in an art-conscious home. In the months before her death, Lillie had near her three photographs: one of her mother, one of her father and one of Christian Herter. Herter was a year younger than Lillie, and Eliza Cobb believed that there was "a great romantic friendship between them. . . . Lillie was also a great friend of his wife's and sort of held the family together. . . . When he died she went and stayed with them."[12]

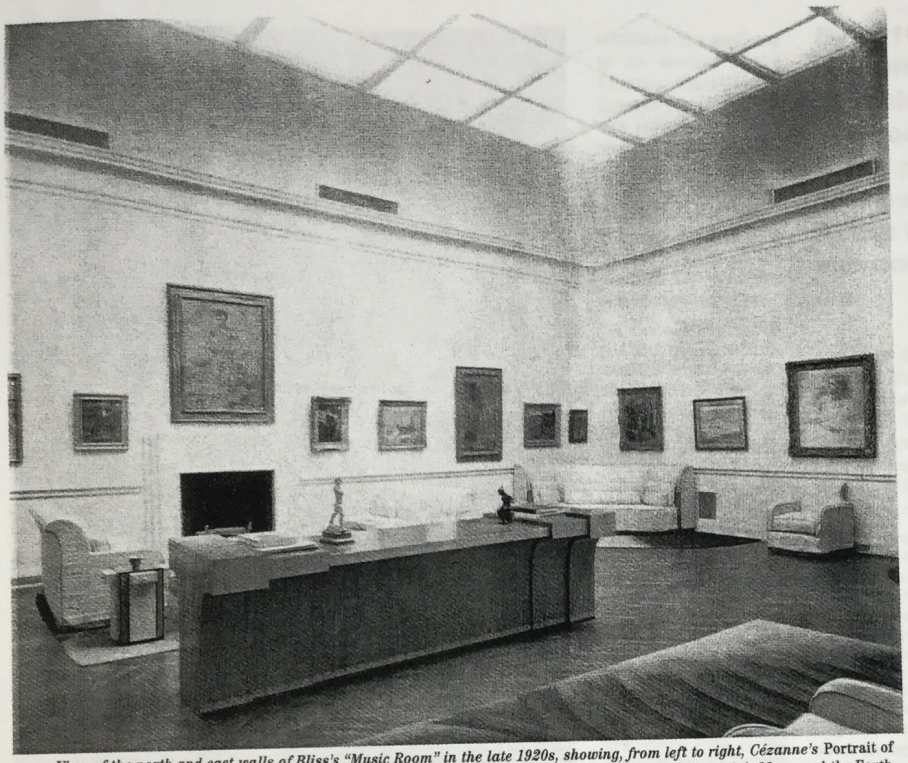
Christian Archibald Herter was the son of Christian Herter, head of Herter Brothers, the successful interior decorating firm which, on a grand scale, influenced American art and design during the period after the Civil War, when millionaires were building palatial houses. Christian Archibald was a physician and distinguished biochemist who is credited with helping to establish the study of biochemistry as a separate discipline in America. Through his friendship with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Herter in 1901 became a charter member of the board of directors of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research (now Rockefeller University) in New York.

It is probable that Lillie's closeness to the Herter family resulted in her meeting Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. Adele Herter, Christian Archibald's sister-in-law, was a painter and friend of Abby's, whose portrait she painted during the summer of 1907. In March 1911, Abby Rockefeller and Adele Herter were two of seven women who signed the certificate of incorporation for the Women's Cosmopolitan Club in New York, and in 1911-12 Lillie was listed as a member. In 1929, Abby and Lillie would be among the founders of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Lillie's earliest known art purchases were probably from Frederick Keppel, a well-established dealer who knew Joseph Pennell and James McNeill Whistler and whose gallery was a few blocks from the Bliss home. In 1909, Christian Archibald Herter bought a small ink-and-sepia landscape drawing by Claude Lorrain from Keppel and gave it to Lillie. From August 1902 through February 1923, Lillie frequented Keppel's gallery, buying at first mostly etchings by Pennell and Whistler and later French drawings and prints by Charles Daubigny, Eugène Delacroix and, in January 1923, a Matisse print and a trial proof for Cézanne's *Bathers* lithograph.

Eliza Cobb recalled that when Lillie was in her 40s she was going through a personally difficult time—her father, who would die in 1911, was becoming old and infirm, and her dear friend Herter, who would die in 1910, was suffering from a fatal nervous disease. To lift her spirits she visited Dikran G. Kelekian, the fine-arts dealer, from whom she had purchased rugs, Persian pots and plates, and antique jewelry.[13] The Kelekian Gallery, which was in Lillie's neighborhood, resembled a Turkish bazaar and was one of the most interesting galleries in New York at the time. Lillie's friend Louisine Havemeyer and, after 1909, the John D. Rockefeller, Jrs., were regular clients. Additionally, Kelekian privately collected modern French art for his homes in New York and Paris during the first two decades of the 20th century. He was also a friend to many artists, including Mary Cassatt and Matisse. Kelekian was a respected connoisseur and by all accounts a kindly, brilliant man with an expansive personality.

One of those people with whom Kelekian enjoyed a warm personal relationship was Arthur B. Davies. Kelekian owned dozens of Davies prints, and Davies acquired Coptic textile fragments from him. Eliza Cobb believed that it was Kelekian who suggested in 1909 that Lillie go to the Macbeth Gallery to see an exhibition of Davies's work. After buying a painting



View of the north and east walls of Bliss's "Music Room" in the late 1920s, showing, from left to right, Cézanne's Portrait of Victor Chocquet Seated, *Cézanne's* Bather, *Daumier's* Laundress, *Cézanne's* Bottle of Liqueur, *Gauguin's* Moon and the Earth, *Derain's* Farm, *Gauguin's* Head of a Tahitian, *Cézanne's* Pines and Rocks, *Seurat's* Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor, *and Picasso's* Woman in White. *Museum of Modern Art Archives.*

and viewing the show several times, she asked Macbeth to arrange for her to meet the artist.

Lillie's life changed dramatically when she met Davies. Over the next two decades she became his faithful and principal patron and confidante. Davies was a romantic artist who was widely admired during his lifetime for his symbolic pictures of female nudes in idyllic landscapes. He was handsome, charismatic, articulate and persuasive, and he seems to have especially appealed to women. One of his contemporaries observed that "the woman who fears her own sensuality . . . finds in the art of Davies the man she wants men to be."[14] Through his travels abroad from 1893 on, he knew about current artistic trends in Europe. He was a galvanizing force in New York, and his advice was sought by dealers, collectors and artists. He was also a confident collector in his own right: from a Cézanne exhibition held at Alfred Stieglitz's gallery in 1911, he bought the only picture that was sold.

In 1931, Eleanor Belmont recalled:

> The person who most influenced [Lillie's] life in the field of painting was undoubtedly Arthur B. Davies. Impressed by his genius she purchased first one painting, then several, then almost anything obtainable, from drawing to large canvas, as he finished it. He led the way to exhibitions, talked painting to her, modern methods, plans for future work, and found a willing listener, disciple and patron. She broadened his horizon and revealed to him the rhythm of sound as he unfolded for her the rhythm of color and form. Assisted by Davies's knowledge and inspired by his dreams her delicate intuitive love of beauty developed rapidly.[15]

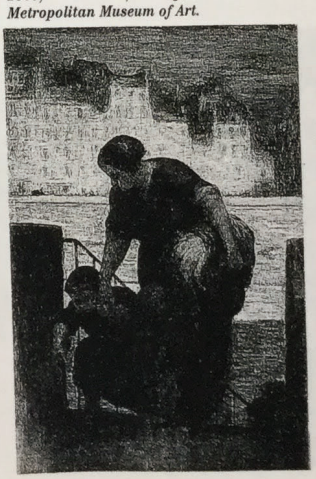
We can only speculate on the true depth of their relationship since no letters between them are known to exist. As her mentor and advisor, Davies helped to shape and form her collection almost from its inception. In the years following the Armory Show, under his tutelage, Lillie developed the eye of a collector. As their relationship matured, it was Davies, more than anyone else, who planted the idea in her that a permanent place for the exhibition of modern art should be established in New York.

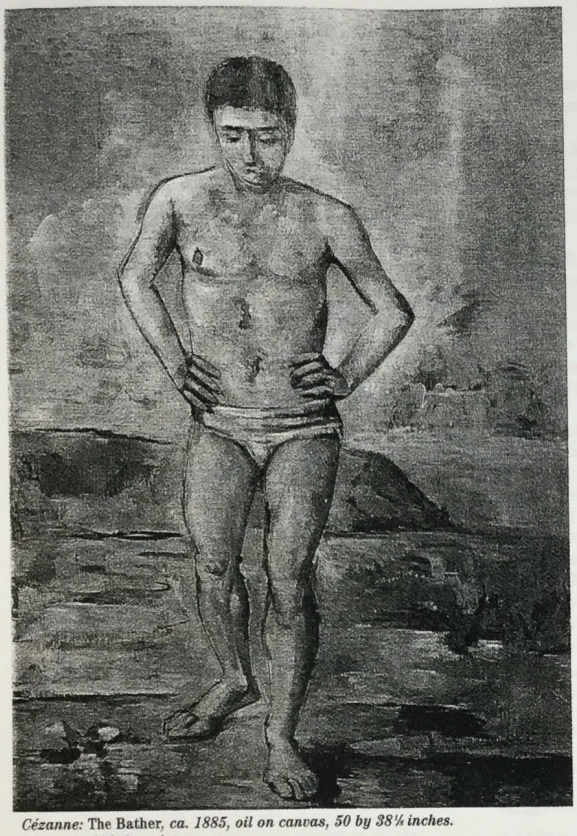
In 1911, Davies and others, concerned that their increasingly modern works were becoming unacceptable to the mainstream National Academy of Design in New York, formed the Association of American Painters and Sculptors. They planned to launch a large independent show devoted to contemporary works. Davies, the artist Walt Kuhn and the critic Walter Pach were determined that the exhibition should include the European avant-garde as well as the American independents. The result of their efforts was the International Exhibition of Modern Art, better known as the Armory Show, which opened in New York on Feb. 12, 1913, in the 69th Regiment Armory at 25th Street and Lexington Avenue. About 1,600 works were included. The show transformed New York's and perhaps America's attitude toward modern art from apathy to excited contention. Most critics at the time found the works "insane" and "degenerate." The *New York Times* warned that the show could "disrupt, degrade, if not destroy not only art but literature and society as well." A Chicago newspaper "lightheartedly" suggested that visitors to the show "smoke two pipefulls of 'hop' and sniff cocaine."[16] However, it aroused the curiosity of the public, 70,000 of whom came to see it in New York, Chicago and Boston.

By the time the Armory Show was being organized, Bliss and Davies had become good friends. Six weeks before the show opened, and probably at the suggestion of Davies, Lillie purchased a painting and a pastel by Degas and an oil by Renoir from the New York branch of the Durand-Ruel Galleries. All three works would be exhibited in the Armory Show. The Degas painting, *Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills*, formerly called *Racecourse*, a small oil of 1884 for which she paid $20,000, was the work the Museum of Modern Art would eventually exchange to acquire *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*.[17]

Lillie was one of the financial backers of the Armory Show, although her contributions remained anonymous at the time. She visited the exhibition daily, and it was there that she gained her first broad introduction to modern art. Largely because of Davies's inspiration and guidance, she purchased two Odilon Redons, *Silence* (a painting on linen), for $540, and *Roger and Angelica* (a pastel), for $810. At the time of the Armory Show, Redon was little known in America. In addition to the painting and pastel, Bliss acquired seven of his prints. Other purchasers of Redon prints were Katherine Dreier, John Quinn and Davies. Bliss also bought color lithographs (two different versions) of Cézanne's

Daumier: The Laundress, *1863, oil on wood, 19¼ by 13 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art.*





Cézanne: **The Bather**, *ca. 1885, oil on canvas, 50 by 38¼ inches. Museum of Modern Art.*

Bathers, as did Walter Arensberg, Kuhn, Quinn, Mrs. Charles C. Rumsey and Stieglitz.[18] Soon after the Armory Show closed, she bought a little Cézanne, *The Road* (ca. 1875), from Davies.

The Armory Show expanded Lillie's art-world connections, and she became friendly with many New York dealers, collectors and artists. Her friendships with Kuhn, Charles and Maurice Prendergast, and Charles Sheeler began at this time. Among the collectors with whom she became acquainted was John Quinn, who took care of legal matters in connection with the Armory Show and was a collector of Davies's work. Quinn named Davies an executor of his estate, and from 1912 to 1920 Kuhn was one of Quinn's art advisors.

Bliss and Quinn enjoyed a cordial relationship. Both began collecting in their 40s, and before becoming impassioned collectors each had great abiding outside cultural interests: Quinn in Irish literature and Bliss in music and theater. Quinn was a complex personality; he was a competitive, often cunning collector with avant-garde taste, and a workaholic curmudgeon, not known for his warmth. He did not confer praise easily. However, his admiration for Bliss, who convinced him to lend to a Cézanne exhibition in 1917 at the Arden Gallery in New York, is evident in a letter he sent to her in February of the same year: "I am glad I was able to contribute in a small way to the success of the Cézanne exhibition. I thought your Cézannes were lovely, and they were among the best, if not the best in the exhibition."[19]

The next year, when a large selection of Davies's paintings owned by Bliss were exhibited at the Macbeth Gallery, Quinn again congratulated her:

> You have done a wonderfully fine thing in assembling this unique collection of Davies's work. Outside of very large rich men, like Rockefeller and Carnegie, who can do great things like founding universities and foundations and institutions for scientific research, it is seldom that people have the vision to conceive and the will to carry out a perfectly rounded thing. . . . I would rather have that vision and carry that work to completion than be Governor of the State of New York. So you have had the vision about Davies's work and . . . I congratulate you sincerely and heartily on it. As something of a collector myself, in many fields and perhaps too scattered to reach anything near perfection in any field, I can imagine the tremendous and enduring satisfaction that it must be to you to have got together this unique collection of Davies's work. It was a big and generous idea . . . to share . . . the collection with the public. . . . Therefore, as a fellow collector, I send you congratulations.[20]

In 1921, Quinn and Bliss were among the collectors who urged Bryson Burroughs, the curator of paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to organize a loan exhibition of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, which opened to the public in September. The protests were scathing, and the fury of the press and of a self-appointed Committee of Citizens and Supporters of the museum was widely reported in New York. Quinn lent 26 works to the show, and Lillie, anonymously, lent 12, including five Cézannes.[21] The show was criticized as "dangerous," and Quinn was accused of masterminding the exhibition. In response to the uproar, Quinn denounced these criticisms as the Ku Klux Klan-inspired ravings of ignorant "lunatics." Bliss wrote a stirring letter to the well-known conservative American decorative designer and National Academy advocate Louis Comfort Tiffany, making her views known. An excerpt from the undated letter was published after her death in the catalogue of the memorial exhibition of her collection:

> We are not so far apart as you seem to think in our ideas on art, for I yield to no one in my love, reverence and admiration for the beautiful things which have already been created in painting, sculpture and music. But you are an artist absorbed in your own production with scant leisure and inclination to examine patiently and judge fairly the work of the hosts of revolutionists, innovators and modernists in this widespread movement through the whole domain of art or to discriminate between what is false and bad and what is sometimes crude, perhaps, but full of power and promise for the enrichment of the art which the majority of them serve with a devotion as pure and honest as your own. There are not yet many great men among them, but great men are scarce—even among academicians.
>
> The truth is you older men seem intolerant and supercilious, a state of mind incomprehensible to a philosopher who looks on and enjoys watching for and finding the new men in music, painting and literature who have something to say worth saying and claim for themselves only the freedom to express it in their own way, a claim which you have always maintained as your inalienable right.[22]

By 1916, Lillie began to buy with the eye of a connoisseur. Her increasing self-confidence is evident in her purchase of many bold paintings by Cézanne. At the time of her death she owned 26 of his works.

Quinn died in 1924; following his instructions, his collection was sold at auction over a two-year period to avoid financial catastrophe for his estate, the

Cézanne: **Still Life with Apples**, *1895-98, oil on canvas, 27 by 36½ inches. Museum of Modern Art.*

Abby Rockefeller, in May 1929, invited Bliss and several others to discuss founding a museum for modern art in New York. The group's efforts would result in the opening of the museum five months later.

taste of the time being very unsympathetic to modern art. Lillie purchased Redon's *Etruscan Vase* (1900-05) and Cézanne's *Rocks Near the Caves Above Le Château Noir*, formerly called *Rocky Ridge* (1895-1900), from the 1926 sale. She had privately acquired from the Quinn collection Gauguin's *Young Man with a Flower* (1891), a beautiful small oil that had once been owned by Matisse, from whom Quinn bought it.[23] The Quinn collection would have been an excellent foundation for a museum devoted to modern art, as Kuhn and Davies hoped. It is likely that they discussed this with others, including Lillie, who were also dismayed at its dispersal. The Quinn collection made such a profound impression on the young Alfred H. Barr, Jr., when he saw it at the memorial exhibition in January 1926, that during his tenure at the Museum of Modern Art, where he would become the founding director in 1929, he sought to acquire important Quinn pictures when they became available.[24]

Continuing as Davies's major patron, Lillie commissioned him in 1914 to paint a mural for the music room adjacent to her bedroom on the third floor of the family home. Since her mother disliked most modern art, it was rather daring of Lillie to have invited Davies to design and install his work in their house. Her mother preferred that only works by Cézanne (and occasionally the Prendergast brothers) be hung downstairs. Lillie kept the rest of her collection on the third floor. Lillie understood that for Davies this commission was important because he very much wanted to revive the practice of mural-making in America. He hoped that the mural would lead the way for other such projects to be awarded to modern artists rather than to academic ones.

Davies, along with Charles and Maurice Prendergast, was among those included in a mural exhibition at the Montross Gallery, in April 1915. With this exhibition, Montross aimed to establish cooperation between painters and architects, thus bridging the gap between modern American art and decorative interior design. Lillie must have been pleased by the idea of wall decorations because soon after the Davies work was in place, she commissioned a mural-size panel from the Prendergasts to go over a mantelpiece. *The Spirit of the Hunt* (ca. 1917) is a highly decorative, tapestrylike work in tempera, gold and silver leaf, and pencil on an incised gesso panel. Additionally, Bliss ordered a Prendergast panel for the front hall of Neil Bliss's home in Westbury and a hope chest by Charles Prendergast for her niece, Eliza. Lillie's interest in acquiring works by the Prendergasts continued through 1928. She would eventually purchase over 20 oil paintings, watercolors and drawings by Maurice, and a screen and seven carved, painted and gilded panels by Charles. Eliza Cobb recalled that when Bliss died there were "stacks and stacks" of Prendergast watercolors in her apartment; Bliss had supported the brothers in the early years by buying two of their watercolors a month.

By 1916, Lillie began to see and buy with the eye of a connoisseur. Her increasing self-confidence as a collector is evident in her purchase of bold works by Cézanne, the artist she especially admired. At the time of her death she owned 26 of his works, many of them now considered pivotal to an understanding of his oeuvre. In January 1916, she acquired eight of the 17 watercolors in the Montross Gallery's Cézanne exhibition, in addition to an oil painting, *Bottle of Liqueur*, previously known as *Fruit and Wine* (ca. 1890). The works in this show, which attracted the favorable attention of artists, were selected by the French critic Felix Fénéon. Among the watercolors on view, Lillie bought the magnificent *House Among Trees* (ca. 1900) and *Foliage* (1895). Lillie was unconcerned that the reviews were less than sympathetic during the time it was on display since reviews, positive or negative, did not influence her purchases. Eleanor Belmont wrote:

> Criticism, even ridicule of an artist's method, or the result achieved had no effect upon her whatsoever: she smiled confidently at those who had nothing in common with her beliefs and went her serene, cheerful way. Just as a rock at the ocean's edge meets the pounding of the teasing surf, after each attack the rock emerges unchanged—it is the wave which breaks and leaves the rock gleaming in the sunlight as bright as before.[25]

Lillie's enthusiasm for Cézanne's work never wavered. Between 1920 and 1926, she purchased six more of his paintings through Marius de Zayas, a Mexican artist turned dealer who had learned the art business as a protégé of Stieglitz: the large and important *Bather* (ca. 1885); *Pines and Rocks (Fontainebleau?)*, ca. 1896-1900; *Still Life with Ginger Jar, Sugar Bowl, and Oranges*, formerly called *Oranges* (1902-06); *Dominique Aubert, the Artist's Uncle*, formerly called *Man in a Blue Cap (Uncle Dominic)*, ca. 1866; and two small gems, *Pears and Knife* (1877-78) and *Carafe, Milk Can, Bowl and Orange*, formerly called *The Water Can* (1879-80).

Two notable Cézannes in Lillie's collection were purchased at the 1922 auction of modern paintings privately owned by Kelekian that took place at New York's Plaza Hotel. Many of the bids were disappointing, and Kelekian, with Quinn acting on his behalf, had to buy back a number of the offerings. Lillie paid $21,000 for *Still Life with Apples* (1895-98), the highest price paid at the sale.[26] It was her most expensive purchase to date, and Lillie was adventurous to buy it, since it was considered to be unfinished. This painting was one of her favorite works, and is today a major work of the Museum of Modern Art. She also purchased Cézanne's *Portrait of Madame Cézanne* (1883-85). Both were originally owned by Ambroise Vollard, the eminent French art dealer, publisher and entrepreneur, and had been lent anonymously by Kelekian to the 1921 Metropolitan exhibition. Both have impeccable provenances; Lillie bought what she loved but was mindful of the good taste of respected prior owners. On Jan. 11, 1929, she acquired the final work for her Cézanne collection from Durand-Ruel: *Portrait of Victor Chocquet Seated*, previously titled *Chocquet in an Arm Chair*, an oil of 1877.

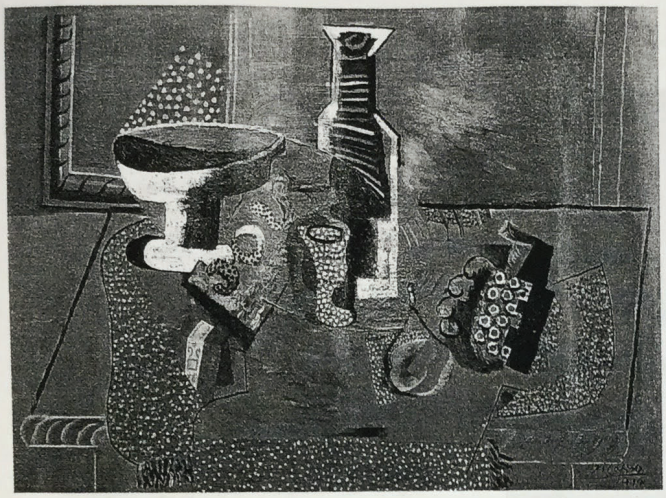
Bliss also acquired works by other artists of Cézanne's generation. Sometime before 1926, she bought, through the Bourgeois Gallery in New York, Gauguin's *The Moon and the Earth* [Hino Te Fatou], 1893.[27] This painting was so reviled by critics of the 1921 Metropolitan Museum show that it had been illustrated in *The World* as typical of the "vile, Bolshevist" work included. From the Degas sales in April 1919, she added six drawings by Degas to her collection, five of which are copies the artist made of old-master drawings.

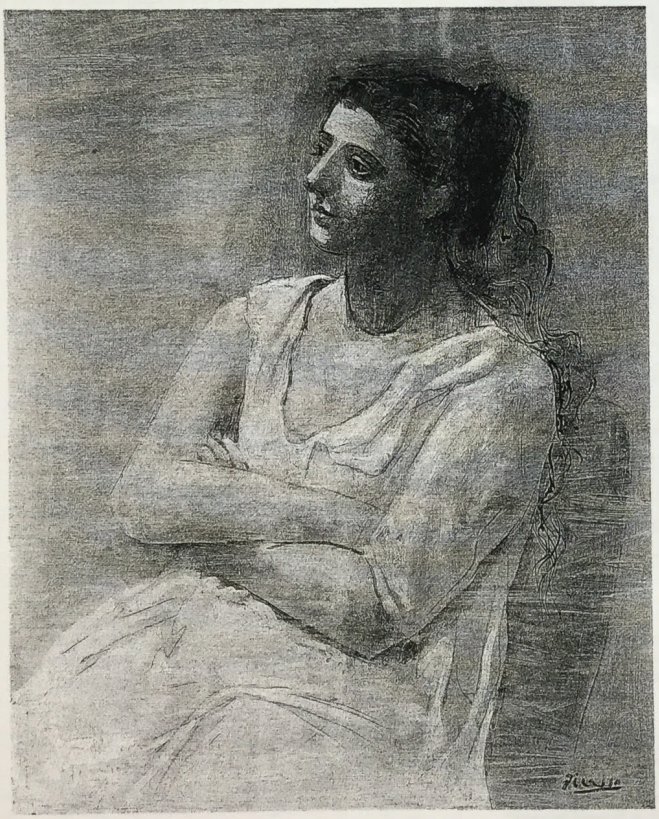
From the 1922 Kelekian sale Lillie also purchased her first painting by Picasso, *Green Still Life* (1914); she already owned a dozen of his works on paper. *Green Still Life* is a subtle, brilliantly colored, tactile picture, quite unlike the artist's nearly monochromatic works of 1910-12, and an appropriate choice for Lillie who, like many collectors of the time, shunned abstraction. Quinn, in describing Bliss in a letter of 1922 to the French dealer Léonce Rosenberg, wrote: "She has bought very heavily of the work of an American artist, Arthur B. Davies, and others. She has been a rather heavy purchaser of works by Cézanne lately. She would not be interested in cubist works at all. I know her well."[28]

Bliss's final period of collecting began around 1927. Davies was living abroad, and she had entered her 60s feeling confident and independent. By this time, visitors were asking to see her collection and museums were borrowing her pictures: Matisse, in the U.S. for negotiations regarding his Barnes mural, visited her in late September 1930 before returning to France. Whereas the work of Cézanne had previously been the center of her attention, the work of Seurat would be the main focus of her collecting activities during these years.

She made annual trips to Europe from 1924 through 1929, and while in London in the summer of 1927, she saw two paintings at the Knoedler Gallery that she subsequently bought through the New York branch: Seurat's *Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor* (1889), and Daumier's *The Laundress* (1861). (She preferred to purchase works through New York dealers.) The most complete of the many versions Daumier painted of the subject, *The Laundress* is the only one dated and, once again, had an impeccable provenance, having been exhibited at the 1861 Paris Salon and illustrated in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in June 1878 and in books on the artist that were published in France in 1888 and 1908. To her single Seurat painting Lillie would add, in 1929, a large group of drawings by the artist. When she bought them, these works were already considered rare and special. *Woman Sewing* (1882-83) and *At the Concert Européen* (ca. 1887), both conté crayon, were done as independent compositions, not as sketches for paintings.

While in London, Bliss also visited the Lefèvre Galleries. Ernest Lefèvre wrote John Kraushaar in New York on July 19, 1927: "Miss Bliss did not come back to see the Cézanne and I am afraid she had already left the hotel when my letter arrived there."[29] Lefèvre and Kraushaar were close business associates and good friends who shared clients. After





Of the two major Picassos in the Bliss bequest, Green Still Life, *1914 (top, 23¼ by 31¼ inches), remains in the Museum of Modern Art's collection, while* Woman in White, *1923 (above, 39 by 31½ inches), was sold to the Metropolitan Museum in 1947.*

Bliss's return to New York she acquired three paintings from Kraushaar, all of which came to him from Lefèvre: Picasso's *Woman in White* (1923), Matisse's *Interior with a Violin Case* (1918-19) and Toulouse-Lautrec's *May Belfort as a Kate Greenaway Baby*, formerly titled *May Belfort in Pink* (1895). Her check to Kraushaar was accompanied by her calling card on which she wrote: "Dear Mr. Kraushaar. Enclosed please find a check for $2500—on account—Yours truly, /s/ L. P. Bliss."[30] She frequently sent rounded sums, occasionally paying long after purchases had occurred.

Her last major purchases in 1928 and 1929, in addition to the Seurats, were from the New York dealer Valentine Dudensing, who in the late 1920s employed the services of the young Pierre Matisse, son of the artist. From October 1928 through October 1929, Bliss bought two paintings by André Derain, *The Farm* (1922-24) and *Landscape, Southern France* (1927-28); Henri Rousseau's *Jungle with a Lion* (1904-10); Matisse's *Girl in Green* (ca. 1921); and Amedeo Modigliani's *Anna Zborowska* (1917). Her bill for all totaled $49,000.

In October 1928, Bliss moved from her house on 37th Street, where there was insufficient light and space to properly hang and show her collection. Since her mother had died five years earlier, she was free to sell the house, move, travel and live as she pleased. She contracted to purchase an apartment in a building being erected at 1001 Park Avenue on the northeast corner at 84th Street. Plans were resolved by July 1929, and in October Bliss moved into an 18-room 11,500-square-foot triplex penthouse with very high ceilings on the 13th, 14th and 15th floors.[31] The "Music Room," as she called it, was in fact a double-storied 20-foot-high spacious gallery, a skylit room 43 feet long and 26 feet wide, with a specially designed lighting system. Over the fireplace hung Cézanne's *Bather*, with Daumier's *Laundress* and Cézanne's *Chocquet* on either side. Other walls were dominated by Modigliani's *Anna Zborowska*, Picasso's *Woman in White* and Cézanne's *Pines and Rocks*. Cézanne's *Still Life with Apples* was placed above a large grand piano. Lillie finally had the space to hang her three favorite works, the Daumier and the Cézanne *Apples* and *Pines and Rocks*, in one space.

The decor of this area of her apartment reflected an independent-minded woman in touch with her time. The furniture and rugs were custom designed by Jules Bouy, a Frenchman who had come to New York around the time of World War I, in the "art moderne" style that had recently become available to fashion-conscious New Yorkers. The furniture and the flat, ornamental setbacks at the sides of the fireplace mantel were characteristic of Bouy's work and evoke the Art Deco urban architecture of this period. The chairs and sofa were slipcovered and the furniture inlaid and painted. On a freestanding center console sat two small sculptures—a Maillol crouching woman and what appears in photos to be an archaic style Greek figure. Abby Rockefeller, who had begun buying modern works in 1924 and was designing a private gallery space in her own home at this time, wrote to a friend: "Very confidentially I feel that Miss Bliss's gallery, which has lots of lovely pictures, is also full of small elephants in the way of furniture. It all looks so big and clumsy to me."[32] Lillie's boldness was lost on

Abby; others, however, thought it unforgettably grand. The rest of the apartment was furnished in a traditional style. The top floor was planned as a separate apartment for the use of the Walter Hampden family when they were in town.

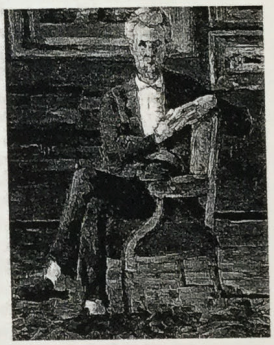
Each room was dominated by Lillie's collection: Cézanne watercolors and Seurat drawings in the entrance foyer and reception room; lithographs by Renoir, Redon, Matisse and Davies, woodcuts by Gauguin, etchings by Picasso and fragments of Coptic and Persian textiles along the corridors. Although Bliss was Davies's principal patron, and she owned hundreds of his works, the only examples hanging in her apartment at the time of her death, aside from a few works on paper in the halls, were three oils and the murals moved from 37th Street, which decorated a small room, proof enough that, although she valued their great friendship and was indebted to him for his advice, she did not exaggerate his artistic importance.

Arthur B. Davies died suddenly in Italy on Oct. 23, 1928. Commemorative exhibitions were held during the next two years in several venues, and Lillie lent generously to all of them. In April 1929, Davies's collection was sold at auction, Lillie and Abby Aldrich Rockefeller being among the buyers, and Abby had a Davies show in her new private gallery in her house. Abby had known Davies for only a few years, but she credited him with encouraging her to acquire modern art, from 1924 on. Davies's death, and the sale of his collections not long after the dispersal of the Quinn collection, combined with the steadfast reluctance of the Metropolitan Museum to regularly show and support late 19th- and 20th-century art, made the time ripe to seriously consider establishing an institution dedicated to exhibiting modern art in New York.

At the end of May 1929, Abby invited Lillie, their mutual friend Mary Quinn Sullivan (no relation to John Quinn) and A. Conger Goodyear to her home to discuss founding a museum for modern art in New York.[33] Mary Sullivan was an art teacher, dealer and collector. Goodyear was a collector of modern art and a former board member at the Albright Gallery in Buffalo; he agreed to head the venture and became chairman. His presence at the meeting was apparently due to Walt Kuhn, who, in a letter of July 9, 1929, to his wife, Vera, took credit for the fact that Goodyear was made chairman of this exploratory committee. Lillie, the leading collector among them, became vice president; Abby, the truly wealthy one, was appointed treasurer. A short time later three more persons were asked to join them: Paul J. Sachs, an eminent art history professor at Harvard, also a collector and an acquaintance of Abby; Frank Crowninshield, a publisher and friend of Lillie; and Mrs. W. Murray Crane, a friend of both women. As a group, they had the knowledge, resources, dedication, status and efficiency that would result in the museum's opening to the public five months later.

Kuhn and Bliss met frequently during the summer of 1929 and discussed details of the new museum. On July 12, Kuhn wrote to his wife: "Miss Bliss phoned yesterday. Evidently the $$ are coming in good order for the future. I surely had a lucky break in the Goodyear business. It means that at last I will have a show under the swellest and best advertised conditions sometime or other."[34] Bliss had gotten to

The Starry Night *was acquired by MOMA in 1941 in an even exchange for two Cézannes and a Toulouse-Lautrec.*



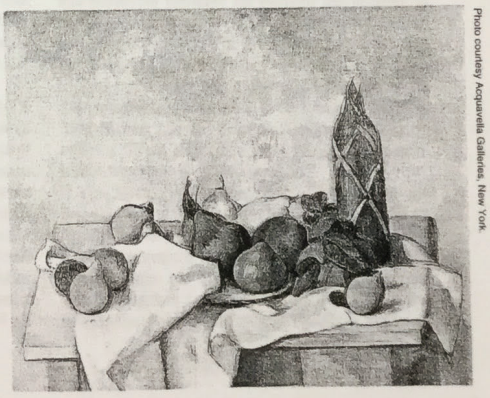


Photo courtesy Acquavella Galleries, New York.

Top, Vincent van Gogh: The Starry Night, *1889, oil on canvas, 29 by 36¼ inches. Museum of Modern Art.*

Above left, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec: May Belfort as a Kate Greenaway Baby, *1895, gouache on board, 24⅞ by 19 inches. Cleveland Museum of Art.*

Above right, Cézanne: Portrait of Victor Chocquet Seated, *ca. 1877, oil on canvas, 18 by 15 inches. Columbus Museum of Art.*

Right, Cézanne: Bottle of Liqueur, *ca. 1890, oil on canvas, 21½ by 25¼ inches. Private collection, Japan.*

know Kuhn well since the Armory Show, and she owned dozens of paintings by him. She bought his *Jeanette* (1928) in 1929, for which he asked $2,500; she said he was mistaken and sent him a check for $3,000 instead.[35]

That summer, Lillie spent a few weeks with her good friend, the concert pianist and teacher Olga Samaroff Stokowski, at her home in Maine. Olga later recalled:

> I never ceased to marvel at the quiet and unobtrusive way in which she managed to be of great service to the arts without ever seeking the limelight for herself. . . . During her visit in Seal Harbor she and my summer neighbor, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., were engrossed in plans for the new Museum of Modern Art in New York.[36]

That same summer Goodyear went abroad to borrow works for the museum's inaugural exhibition, while Crowninshield remained in New York to work out the logistics. They regularly communicated with Lillie and Abby, and it is clear that the women's preferences were respected: they insisted on a French show, not the Ryder-Homer-Eakins exhibition proposed by the men. Abby and Lillie were a team. Naturally generous in spirit and outlook, they were, in a most agreeable way, accustomed to getting what they wanted. They were actively involved in all aspects of the new venture. Crowninshield wired Goodyear: "Rockefeller Bliss approve such an expenditure; . . . [Mrs. Rockefeller] and Miss Bliss think sum of $15,000 is maximum for structural charges."[37] Bliss wrote Goodyear explaining that she believed that they must secure $75,000 before launching the venture. Kuhn reiterated this in a letter to his wife dated July 19, 1929: "Here's the dope on the new gallery. Miss Bliss came to the apartment this P.M.—They have $60,000 collected so far, only want 15 more—or 75,000 to go ahead."[38] Concurrently, in a letter to Goodyear full of details about a dinner they were arranging, Lillie wrote: "Sorry to bother you but Vice-Presidents are always bothersome."[39]

On Nov. 8, 1929, the museum opened to the public in the Heckscher Building at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street with an exhibition titled "Cézanne, Gauguin, Seurat, van Gogh" and was an instant success. Eight Bliss pictures were included in this inaugural show.

Lillie acquired no major works after the museum opened. Barr believed that she wanted to add an important Seurat figure composition and a painting by Vincent van Gogh to her collection.[40] She sold paintings and saved money by altering her lifestyle in order to buy a van Gogh, but she never did. Eliza Cobb recalled that although Lillie had a substantial household staff, in the summer of 1930 she paid all but one of them half wages and lived alone in the large apartment with the laundress and the chauffeur, visiting Neil's family in Westbury, Long Island, on weekends. "And all of this was because she put her money into pictures and into the modern art museum."[41] Additionally, her resources had been diverted from art to charity: the Depression had set in, and Lillie was concerned with the unemployed; her will included a $50,000 bequest to the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. Perhaps she also had fewer funds available due to the deflated stock market.

In July 1930, Lillie became ill, was operated on for cancer, seemed to be recuperating and was optimistic about the future. One of her last ventures outside her home was to visit the museum's "Toulouse-Lautrec/Redon" exhibition on the day it closed, Mar. 2, 1931.[42] Her three Redons and her Toulouse-Lautrec oil were on view. It is not difficult to imagine the 29-year-old Alfred Barr showing her through the galleries. Barr and Bliss saw each other often during the short time they were acquainted, and they had much in common. Like her, he deeply loved music; they went to the movies and attended concerts together. Eleanor Belmont recalled that Bliss was attracted to youth. "She saw what they saw, encouraged the expression of their ideas and spontaneously offered them unprejudiced consideration."[43] Certainly Lillie must have greatly respected Barr's brilliance and enthusiasm; after all, she planned to leave her collection in his charge.

Unfortunately, however, their relationship would never mature, as did that of Barr and Abby Rockefeller, because 10 days later, on Mar. 12, Lillie died. Neil and Eliza were at her bedside. A private memorial service was held in the Music Room of her apartment, and Walter Hampden, who at the time was appearing in New York, delivered the eulogy to a room crowded with friends. When the contents of her will became known, both Abby Rockefeller and Goodyear were very surprised: she had not previously informed them of her decision to leave to the museum the most important works in her collection. Kuhn apparently had an inkling of her intention when he wrote to his wife on July 19, 1929: "Her whole collection will no doubt go to the new museum, which is certainly looming up big."[44]

In bequeathing her art to the museum before its first anniversary, Bliss had secretly decided what form her support would take. Her will required the museum to raise an endowment to make her gift a reality.

Lillie Bliss could not afford to support the museum financially in the same way as Abby Rockefeller. However, in bequeathing her collection to the museum three months before its first anniversary, she had quietly and secretly decided what form her support would take. Her will stipulated, however, that the Museum of Modern Art would have to raise an endowment to make her gift a reality.[45]

Specifically, the will stated that the works cited in her bequest would become "the absolute property" of the museum once it had been established "to the full and complete satisfaction" of the trustees of her estate that the museum was "sufficiently endowed . . . on a firm financial basis and in the hands of a competent board." She also stipulated that two of her Cézannes—*Still Life with Ginger Jar, Sugar Bowl, and Oranges* and *Still Life with Apples*—and her Daumier *Laundress* could never be sold or otherwise disposed of, and that if the Modern did not want them, they "would become the property of the Metropolitan Museum of Art."[46] The Cézannes remain at the Modern and the Daumier went to the Met in 1947.[47]

Bliss's entire collection was valued at $1,139,036 at the time of her death. The Ferargil Galleries of New York prepared an inventory of the contents of the Park Avenue apartment and did the appraisals: the four pictures with the highest values were three Cézannes—*Bather* ($60,000), *Still Life with Apples* ($50,000) and *Pines and Rocks* ($40,000)—and the Degas *Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills* ($40,000). Abby Rockefeller wrote to Neil Bliss that Lillie's gesture was "so in line with the generous way in which she did all things that it will make her memory a very living inspiration to us all. It makes me more eager than ever to see the museum worthily succeed."[48]

Two months after her death, the 12th exhibition held by the Museum of Modern Art, from May 13 to Oct. 6, 1931, was a "Memorial Exhibition: The Collection of the Late Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, Vice-President of the Museum." Works by 24 artists were selected, and a small catalogue was issued. By the time the show closed, 32,144 people had seen it. The public opening was preceded by a memorial service held in the galleries and attended by 300 guests.

From 1931 through 1934, the museum's trustees and its director were preoccupied with raising funds to meet the challenge of the Bliss bequest. The matter of a permanent collection was foremost on their minds. One of the fundamental purposes of establishing the museum, Barr argued, was to have on continuing display works by the masters of the past 50 years. He cautioned that if the museum did not establish a permanent collection policy, it might as well change its name from Museum of Modern Art to Exhibition Gallery.

In March 1934, the trustees met the financial terms of the Bliss will, her bequest was accessioned and a Museum of Modern Art with a permanent collection became a reality. In order for the museum to secure the bequest, the estate required that the museum raise $1 million.[49] However, because of the difficulty of raising funds during the Depression, this initial sum was reduced to $600,000. The money came from several sources: Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, $200,000 (given to her by her husband for this purpose); the Carnegie Foundation, $100,000; the other trustees, $200,000; and an anonymous donor, $100,000. The anonymous donor was Abby's son, Nelson A. Rockefeller, who would later become very active in the museum. He made the donation because he wanted his mother to know that someone in the family besides herself was deeply supportive of the new museum. He told his mother of his gift two months later.

Two years after the museum had moved to its new quarters, a limestone town house at 11 West 53rd Street, the Bliss bequest was shown in its entirety. From May 14 to Sept. 12, 1934, the exhibition was seen by 30,445 people.

The Lillie P. Bliss bequest ensured that the museum had a foundation upon which to build its future. Her action reflected her confidence in her friends to secure the endowment and in Alfred Barr to make her dream come true. Her courage and intelligence are reflected in the paintings she left to the public. The most important works in

her collection are the French paintings and drawings from the latter part of the 19th century by artists whose present fame has overcome the neglect or derision which they often endured during their lifetimes: Cézanne, Degas, Gauguin, Redon, Seurat and Toulouse-Lautrec. In this alone, her courage has been vindicated. Her support of American artists of the time is also noteworthy for, at her death, she owned more works by contemporary American artists than by any others: predominantly Davies, Kuhn and the Prendergasts.

In 1931, two months after Lillie's death, Eleanor Belmont wrote:

> She was an advocate for modern art when it had few admirers, a patron when it had almost no market; finally through her keen intelligence, valiant championing of young artists, and her personal experience with their work, she became not only an important collector but one of the best judges of contemporary painting in this country. To gather that which has stood the test of time takes skill and taste, but to select wisely from the vast amount of unweeded material produced by contemporary artists, requires taste, courage, and insight that amount almost to the gift of prophecy.[50]

Bliss acquired boldly and she bequeathed what she thought best, thus giving a permanent collection to a public institution that she helped to found. The collection of the Museum of Modern Art today is a living example of her noble legacy. □

From 1931 to '34, funds were raised to fulfill the challenge of Bliss's bequest. In 1934, the works were accessioned, and a Museum of Modern Art with a permanent collection became a reality.

1. Picasso was notified of the sale of the *Demoiselles* to the museum in a letter of Dec. 10, 1937, from César de Hauke of the Seligmann Gallery in New York, but it would take two years to complete the financial arrangements; the museum publicly announced the acquisition in January 1939. For details on this transaction, see Judith Cousins and Hélène Seckel, "Chronology of *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1907-1939" in *Studies in Modern Art*, no. 3, John Elderfield, ed., New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1994, pp. 199-202. The Degas, now titled *Jockeys on Horseback Before Distant Hills* (1884), is in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. A payment of $28,000 in 1939 equals about $364,600 today.
2. Isabella Stewart Gardner is not included in this group because her interest in art centered mainly on the old masters. Although she agreed to be listed as a vice president of the Armory Show in 1913, she did not collect work by artists included in the show. Two of the Matisses in the Gardner Museum, for example, were given to her. Among her contemporaries, she was most interested in the work of John Singer Sargent, one of the most accepted artists of the time, in addition to that of James McNeill Whistler and Anders Zorn. She was born almost 25 years before Bliss and died in 1924, one year before Sargent.
3. Gwendoline (1882-1951) and Margaret (1884-1963) Davies, of Llandiman, Wales, began buying French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings in 1912, and by 1920 they had assembled one of the most impressive and important collections of its kind in Great Britain. Their activities influenced other collectors in Britain, notably Samuel Courtauld, who acknowledged their importance. By 1924, having amassed over 200 works, the sisters stopped actively acquiring. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to donate works to museums in London, they bequeathed the entire collection to the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, where it can be seen today.
4. Eleanor Belmont in *Memorial Exhibition: The Collection of the Late Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, Vice-President of the Museum. May 17-September 27, 1931.* New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1931, p. 8. (Subsequently called *Bliss 1931*)
5. Elizabeth Bliss Parkinson (later Cobb), Archives of American Art, oral history interview by Paul Cummings, Jan. 3, 1978. The author spoke with Cobb on many occasions from 1987 to 1991 and more recently with members of the family. (Subsequently called AAA: Oral History)
6. Lillie P. Bliss to Eleanor Belmont, Oct. 17, 1930. Belmont Papers, Columbia University, Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
7. Lillie was a founder of the Walter Hampden Theater enterprise, and those who worked with her on its establishment admired her "exquisite dealing with difficult situations, her tact, and her patience." MOMA Archives, Bliss Scrapbook, Claude Bragdon to Cornelius N. Bliss, Mar. 13, 1931. Bliss's letters to Walter Hampden are filled with insights about the theater and reveal a thorough knowledge of literature. The author thanks Raymond Wemmlinger, archivist, The Players Club, New York, for providing access to the Hampden Papers.
8. Author's meeting with Paul Hampden in Connecticut, Mar. 28, 2002, and subsequent conversations.
9. Lillie Bliss to Walter Hampden [Oct. 8, 1923] Hampden Booth Theater Library, The Players Club, Box #30.
10. Bliss to Hampden, Aug. 2 [1924], Box #7.
11. AAA: Oral History, p. 28.
12. AAA: Oral History, p. 3.
13. I am grateful to Nanette R. Kelekian for sharing reminiscences and papers concerning her grandfather, Dikran G. Kelekian, and her father, Charles Kelekian, with whom she managed the gallery until it closed in 1988. Lillie's interest in Persian art continued throughout her life.
14. Paul Rosenberg, "American Painting," *Dial* 71, December 1921, p. 655.
15. *Bliss 1931*, p. 7.
16. Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*, New York, Holt, 2000, p. 102.
17. This $20,000 paid in 1913 would equal around $364,000 in today's dollars, a multiple of about 18.
18. See "Catalogue Raisonné," in Milton Brown, *The Story of the Armory Show*, New York, Abbeville, 1988, p. 254.
19. New York Public Library, John Quinn Letter Box #14, sheet 431.
20. NYPL, Quinn Box #17, sheet 898.
21. See Rebecca A. Rabinow, "Modern Art Comes to the Metropolitan," *Apollo*, October 2000; the appendix, pp. 9-12, is a checklist of the 1921 Metropolitan exhibition.
22. *Bliss 1931*, p. 3.
23. AAA: Jacques Seligmann papers, Box 50: correspondence. My thanks to Judith Throm for her assistance in this and other matters.
24. In January 1926, Barr was a graduate school preceptor at Princeton. While he was director (1929-43) and director of the museum collections (1947-67) at the Museum of Modern Art, many Quinn works entered the collection, including Rousseau's *Sleeping Gypsy*, Matisse's *Still Life after de Heem* and Picasso's *Three Women at the Spring*. Casts or versions of three of Quinn's Brancusi sculptures were acquired through the Bliss bequest.
25. *Bliss 1931*, p. 8.
26. Throughout the 1920s, the multiple for today's dollar is a little over ten, $21,000 in 1922 being worth around $226,000.
27. This painting was acquired by Paul Rosenberg from the first estate sale of works owned by Degas held in Paris in 1918. De Záyas lent it anonymously to the 1921 Metropolitan exhibition.
28. NYPL, Quinn Box #25, sheet 110.
29. AAA: Kraushaar Gallery Papers; incoming letters; Alex Reed & Lefèvre Ltd., 1927, unfilmed.
30. AAA: Kraushaar Gallery Papers; incoming letters: Be-Br 1928, unfilmed.
31. Plans generously made available by Christopher Gray, director of the Office for Metropolitan History in New York.
32. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller to William Valentiner, Aug. 23, 1930. Rockefeller Archive Center, Rockefeller Family Archives, RG2, Office of Messrs R; AAR Series: Sub-series 1 Correspondence, Box #5, folder 74.
33. During February and March of 1929, Lillie was traveling in the Mediterranean and Middle East with her niece and brother. On Mar. 7, when they were disembarking in Haifa, they met Abby and John Rockefeller, who invited them to join their party for lunch. Although the subject of establishing a museum for modern art might have come up, as has been conjectured, it is unlikely, with so many present, that a detailed discussion occurred. After lunch both parties continued their separate ways. However, Abby would have had lots of time to discuss the matter with Mary Sullivan when they met aboard ship on Abby's return trip to New York.
34. AAA: Walt Kuhn Papers, D240.
35. MOMA Archives, Registrar Papers, #34b.
36. Olga Samaroff Stowkowski, *An American Musician's Story*, New York, Norton, 1939, p. 251.
37. MOMA Archives, A. Conger Goodyear Scrapbook #1. (Subsequently called ACG Scrapbook)
38. AAA: Kuhn Papers, D240.
39. MOMA Archives, Bliss Scrapbook, Lillie P. Bliss to A. Conger Goodyear, undated.
40. *Bliss 1931*, p. 12.
41. AAA: Oral History, p. 27.
42. *Bliss 1931*, p. 9.
43. Ibid., p. 9.
44. AAA: Kuhn Papers, D240.
45. In 1917, Congress enacted the first legislation providing for the deductibility of charitable contributions to educational institutions by individuals for federal income tax purposes. Section 403(a) of the Revenue Act of 1918 provided that the net value of an estate be determined by deducting the value of the bequest from the gross estate.
46. Bliss will, MOMA Archives, ACG Scrapbook #10.
47. For an explanation of why and how Bliss pictures (including Picasso's *Woman in White*, Cézanne's *Dominique Aubert, the Artist's Uncle* and several Seurat drawings) were sold by the Museum of Modern Art to the Metropolitan Museum, see Kirk Varnedoe, "The Evolving Torpedo: Changing Ideas of the Collection of Painting and Sculpture of the Museum of Modern Art," *Studies in Modern Art*, no. 5, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1995, pp. 12-73.
48. MOMA Archives, Bliss Scrapbook, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller to Cornelius N. Bliss, Apr. 20, 1931.
49. $1 million in 1934 would be equivalent to around $13,514,000 today.
50. *Bliss 1931*, pp.7-8.

The author thanks Michelle Yun, Claire Henry and Michelle Elligott from the MOMA staff for their assistance.

Author: *Rona Roob is the former chief archivist of the Museum of Modern Art.*

Herald Tribune
March 20-1931

Miss L. P. Bliss Will Gives Noted Art to Museums

Modern Gallery Gets Bulk of Treasure House of Contemporary Master Works

$350,000 to Institutions

Daughter of McKinley's Secretary of Interior Aids Kin

The will of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, daughter of the late Cornelius N. Bliss, Secretary of the Interior in the Cabinet of President McKinley, and Mrs. Elizabeth Plummer Bliss, was filed for probate in Surrogate's Court yesterday, disposing of an important collection of modern paintings, chiefly by Arthur B. Davies, one of the most highly regarded of American painters. Miss Bliss died March 12 at her home, 1001 Park Avenue.

Miss Bliss's collection is considered one of the most valuable and notable groups of modern paintings in this country. Although connoisseurs were reluctant to estimate yesterday the value of the collection, it was pointed out that some of the paintings alone are worth from $70,000 to $100,000 each. Others, however, are worth only $200 or so. Miss Bliss was recognized as owning some of Cezanne's finest works, together with other fine examples by Matisse, Picasso and other French moderns.

Modern Museum Gets Bulk

Miss Bliss left the bulk of her collection to the Museum of Modern Art, of 730 Fifth Avenue. The pictures designated in this bequest are twenty-one paintings by Cezanne, which include "Self Portrait," "Portrait of Madame Cezanne," "Portrait of M. Choquet," "Early Landscape," "The Battler," "Pine and Rocks" and "Big Still Life," which was bought by Miss Bliss in 1919 for $21,000; "Head of a Tahitian," "Hina Tefu Tu" and "Set A Woodcuts," by Gauguin; Picasso's "Green Still Life," "Woman in White" and eight of his lithographs.

The museum also receives three unnamed pictures by Derain, four by Matisse, including "Girl in Green," "On the Riviera" and two lithographs, a print by Daumier, portrait of Mme. Belfort N. Rose by Toulouse-Lautrec, two pastels, one oil and one lithograph by Odillon Redon, "After the Battle," "Race course," and drawings from old masters by Degas and a landscape by Renoir.

The will provides that "such distribution shall only be made at such time upon or prior to the death of the survivor of my nephew, Cornelius N. Bliss jr., and my niece, Elizabeth A. Bliss, or at such time upon or prior to the expiration of three years from my death." The trustees are instructed not to distribute the pictures until the museum has been proved solvent. All the paintings in the collection are the property of the Paintings and Prints Corporation, which was owned by Miss Bliss, and are to be held in trust by her brother, Cornelius N. Bliss, by Robert G. McIntyre, of the Mac-

beth Galleries, and Donald Mackenzie until the dissolution of the corporation.

Alfrted H. Barr jr., director of the Museum of Modern Art, of which Miss Bliss was vice-president, expressed his pleasure at the gift to the museum, but said its acceptance would be up to the board of trustees, which includes among others Mrs. John D. Rockefeller jr. Mr. Barr declared it would take at least three days' study of Miss Bliss's collection to set a monetary value on it.

Metropolitan Gifts Made

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is bequeathed three Byzantine or early Italian paintings; "l'Etretat" by Monet, "Italian Hill Town" and "The Unicorns" by Davies, two of his water-colors and two wax and oil sketches by him to be selected by the museum.

The Brooklyn Museum of Art and Science receives six Davies paintings. They are "Freshness of the Wounded," "The Dawning," "Children Dancing," "Yielding Mists," "Homage to the Ocean" and "In the Sierras."

"Line of Mountains," and "Sleep" by Davies, are given to the National Gallery of British Art, in London; Phillips Academy, at Andover, Mass., gets "Spring Ecstacy" and four water colors by Davies and three water colors by Maurice Prendergast. Other bequests of Davies' pictures to museums are: Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, "Hill to Hill," "Frankincense," "Before Sunrise" and "The Great Mother"; San Francisco Art Association, "So As by Fire"; Portland Art Association, Portland, Ore., "Out of the Dew" and "Flocks of Spring"; St. Paul Art Institute, "Little Mattie," "Home" and "Hudson River"; Memorial Art Gallery of Rochester, "Winds of Corinth" and "Park at Evening"; Rhode Island School of Design, of Providence, "Clothed in Dominion"; Utica Public Library, Utica, N. Y., "Chanter's Mound" and "Mother and Child"; Cleveland Museum of Art, four drawings to be selected; the Newark Museum Association, "Indian Fantasy," "Wing on the Sea," "Foot Log on Jonathan Creek" and "Marmorearl Dream," and International House, 500 Riverside Drice, "Alchemy" and a large landscape.

Cornelius N. Bliss, brother, and his wife, Mrs. Zaidee C. Bliss, of Oyster Bay, L. I., receive four pictures by Prendergast and seventeen by Davies, $50,000 cash and the personal effects. Mr. Bliss also receives the residuary estate.

Elizabeth A. Bliss, a niece, of Oyster Bay, receives some water colors by Davies and Walt Kuhn, six other Davies works and $50,000 cash. Virginia H. Clark, of 4 East Sixty-sixth Street, receives two oil paintings and one water color by Davies. Any other paintings remaining in the collection after the special bequests have been made are to go to the Museum of Modern Art.

Miss Bliss also left $100,000 to the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, of 105 East Twenty-second Street, of which her brother is president; $50,000 to the Society of New York Hospital, of 8 West Sixteenth Street; $150,000 to the Cornelius N. Bliss Memorial Fund, Inc., of 117 Duane Street, and $50,000 to the Broadway Tabernacle Society, of 211 West Fifty-sixth Street. A nephew, Cornelius N. Bliss jr., of Oyster Bay, gets $50,000.

Miss Bliss directed that if the Museum of Modern Art should be unable to accept her donations the trustees of the museum turn the works over to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The will, which was filed by Millbank, Tweed, Hope & Webb, of 15 Broad Street, wat dated August 16, 1930, and names the United States Trust Company and Cornelius N. Bliss executors.

TRENDS IN THE REALM OF ART—LOCAL

A PERSONAL COLLECTION

Miss Bliss as a Collector Could Not Be Pressed Within Boundaries of a Type

By ELISABETH LUTHER CARY.

WHEN we heard of the death of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss a few days ago the first feeling with many of us was the keen regret that comes with the loss of a clear and delicate personality not to be classified as a type. Even as a collector of art she could not be pressed within the firm boundaries of a type. She strayed, not willfully, but wistfully, from the very old to the very new, plucking from one period a piece of sculpture, from another an objet d'art; but in painting her sympathies were largely with the young.

Arthur Davies was among the young when she found him, and she went with him from such warm and lovely visions of childhood as "The Throne" and "Dancing Children," through such deeper dreams as "Unicorns" and "Sleep," to the classic line in "Glyph" and "Constellations," including on the way the decorations for her music room representing his nearest approach to cubistic statement. It would be quite impossible to see Davies whole, without seeing him in the Bliss collection; and, most certainly, it would be impossible to see the Bliss collection fairly represented without its distinguished group of Davies paintings.

Davies and Redon will seem to many appropriately associated in a company of paintings leaning toward the side of individuals as against schools. Each, doubtless, is impossible to follow with success as pupil follows master. Each, also, has borne the oppressive name of mystic. But the mysticism of Davies is almost the opposite of Redon's. Davies in his thought personifies elemental forces, the tides that move incessantly in obedience to a fundamental rhythm, the seasons that change endlessly from swelling bud to falling leaf; dawn and awakening, sleep and dreams; the downward fall of waters, the upheaval of the earth into forms of mountains; the energy of struggle, the zest of adventure, the exultation of joy. Whatever his works to the student of aesthetics, they lead from their roots in natural experience toward the wonder with which nature is regarded by the human mind whenever the human mind has courage to linger upon her miracles.

* * *

REDON also was deeply impressed by nature and has left eloquent descriptions of places seen during his youthful wanderings. Certain places where he stayed longest seem to have lived in his memory without the loss of a single detail. With, possibly, some consciousness of the unnatural or supernatural light in which his work seemed to the spectator to be bathed, he emphasized his constant recognition of and obedience to the laws of nature, and proclaimed that an artist who thus constrained himself was thereafter free to follow any line, choose any subject, any means of presenting his idea.

This, of course, is incontrovertible; but in Redon's work one is aware of an interest far removed from the natural phenomena so rich in suggestion for Davies. Dreams became at the outset of his creative life his the jungle, and a work of consummate art.

Such work brings to the dullest of us the intimation that life for those who look closely and feel strongly declines to be pressed into a strictly limited and clear-cut form. Its unlimited energy cannot be confined within fixed boundaries of time or space. It overflows our conscious control and sweeps on into a region that, so far as the human mind can conceive, has no definition, "world without end" is all that we can say of it.

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IT is far more than the greater number of artists in any age do say; and in our own age, so youthful in its triumphant physical and mental activities, the tendency increases to emphasize rational solutions and exact statement. One of the characteristics of choice in the collection upon which we touch is recognition of this unquenchable flow of vitality beyond accuracy, beyond precision, beyond knowledge. Miss Bliss, despite the sensitive and practical attitude she maintained toward acquisition, herself possessed something of the fugitive temper by which her favorite artists escaped the cramping of vitality by implacable efficiency.

Here is Seurat, threatened by the perfection of his science, showing us in his drawings, as he did not in his completed paintings, how the clarity of his composition, the systematic order of his technique, trembled into the movement of life through his apprehension of an "other world" not to be checked and captured by science. Possibly no other artist shows so convincingly at one time both the splendor of science and the freedom of art. Had he not died at the early age of 32, the age of full blooming in artists of genius, his painting doubtless would have taken on something of the mystery of his drawings.

Here is Cézanne who followed with patience and with passion the path that led beyond arrival, who found nature "very complex" and "the progress to be made interminable." He is represented by several fine examples, but most thrillingly by the "Blue Landscape" through which the mind makes its way with no end in sight.

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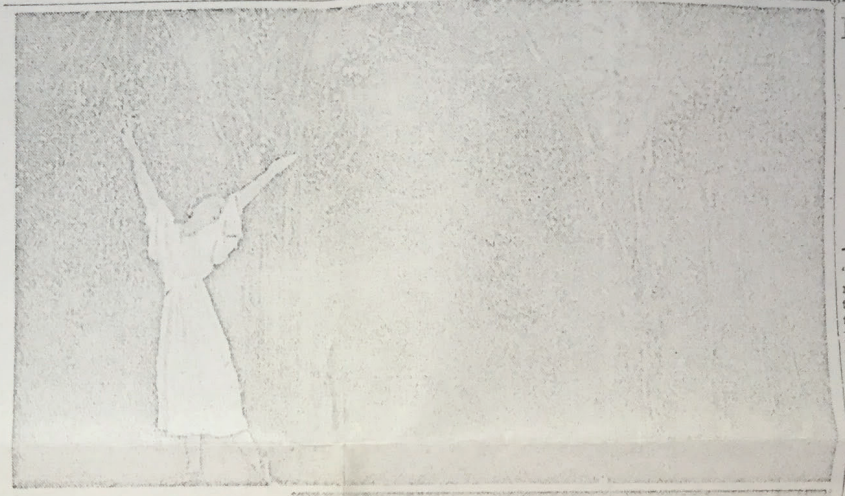
TO pretend that the collection as a whole maintains this supremacy of the incomplete and uncompletable would be absurd. Probably no large collection could be formed by any one person that would be free from precise ideas precisely carried out, and to attempt such would be to travel perilously if not to hurl one's self upon disaster. Incompleteness has no value unless it is associated with the temper that explores the region of activity more persistently than it is ever explored by those to whom the goal is more important than the race.

Moreover, there would be far less chance of appreciating the larger gift if others, charmingly cabined and confined, were not at hand for contrast and background. So far as our memory serves there are none too many of these minor talents in evidence in the Bliss collection, but while the paintings already mentioned have been emphasized, not only because the artists belong to the comparatively small group showing in their art sensibility to the influence of the invisible world, but because of the exquisite sensibility to their quality as art shown by the character of the examples chosen by this collector; there is great variety among the rest.

Daumier is at his mildest in the richly modeled "Laundress," the figure of a woman, her bundle of laundry under her arm, holding a child by the hand as the two climb steps leading toward us from the river bank. Gauguin's "Portrait of a Young Tahitian" is handsome and natural, agreeably free from his aggressive symbolism. Picasso's "Woman in White" is a serene, contemplative figure, arousing no questions and no antagonisms. In "Hina Tefatou" we get the Gauguin of Tahiti and the exotic subject matter in which lay his great interest. Pissarro from whom Pissarro's early style is represented. There are Renoir, supposed to have stemmed, also Degas, Derain, Monet, playing into the rhythm of modern art. There are Modigliani and Chirico. From the American group may be taken such vivid contrasts as Prendergast dreaming true of aristocratic form as it existed in the Greek past and adding to it a sensitiveness purely modern; Walt Kuhn intent upon the expression of concentrated character in contemporary types; Paul Dougherty of robust vision and technique.

There are many more. This notice is, of course, far from being complete, and from lack of sufficient familiarity with the collection could not see that. It is merely an attempt to capture and fix an impression of extraordinary depth of a personal taste and intuition that with the passing of Miss Bliss has vanished from our world of art.



DAVIES AND LAUTREC
Two Paintings in the Collection of Miss Lizzie Bliss, Who Died March 12. Above: "Spring," by Arthur B. Davies. Right: "Miss May Belfort," by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

EXHIBITIONS NOW ON IN THE GALLERIES OF NEW YORK

By RUTH GREEN HARRIS.

THERE is a challenge in suggestion. The abstract paintings by Louis Marcoussis (at the Valentine Gallery) hints at the original object, and from this starting point the imagination builds an objective picture on the lines suggested to have taken him to the Near East and to the part of Moorish Spain that is more Eastern than European.

* * *

Charles Schlein, at the Brownell-Lambertson Galleries, has been doing something with the form and color of his paint to make it an is, for this writer, the most attractive. There is part of the Colonial column, very gleaming white, round and substantial; there is a huge flower-pot, substantial also, and then there is a wicker chair, thin but sinewy and quite able to hold its own under any sort of strain.

adult has not humiliated himself by giving the child silly or ugly things —even though the child might prefer them (?). The textiles are particularly good. Two complete rooms, one for a girl of 8, the other for a boy of 12, are the most conspicuous exhibits.

preoccupation. "Dans le Rêve" is the title of the first group of drawings published by him, and he was henceforth to use the mechanism of the dream to produce his haunting effects.

In the collection formed by Miss Bliss her well-nigh matchless tact of selection is nowhere more clearly revealed than in her choice from the the works of Redon. The dominating example is the "Silence," a dim head with closed eyes emerging from a hollow dark, a hand, two fingers pressed against the lips, nothing more definite and nothing more required to suggest the environing silence into which we pass, in which, in truth, we live in spite of the clamor endlessly assailing our senses. This rendering of an illimitable mental experience would in itself suffice to justify Redon's belief that nothing need be defined or understood or limited or stated with precision since all that is sincerely new carries its significance in itself.

* * *

IN spite of the numbers of works by artists of many minds to be found in this collection, these two "mystics," Davies and Redon, seem to be the key to its character. They have entered other collections in beautiful examples without, as here, seeming less to be guests than hosts, less to modify the whole than to affirm its special irreducible quality.

This, however, is not to say that other works fail to speak with eloquence and authority. Among those that cling to this writer's memory, and there are many that have dropped away, are Cézanne, Lautrec, Picasso, Seurat. Of these, strangely—quite unaccountably—the one most allied to Redon and Davies appears as the caustic realist Toulouse-Lautrec. Perhaps because he, like Redon, was content to suggest, to leave forms without precise definition, to let a figure emerge from shadows filled with its own significance—possibly because, like Davies, he respected natural forces and saw in the tidal ebb and flow of human life about him a movement too elemental to be checked by a sentimental ideal or denial of a resistless rhythm in the blood.

At all events the figure of May Belfort drifts toward us, touched with a wildness born of freedom from traditional conventions, as artificial as melodrama, as natural as a jaguar in

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TO pretend that the collection as a whole maintains this supremacy of the incomplete and uncompletable would be absurd. Probably no large collection could be formed by any one person that would be free from precise ideas precisely carried out, and to attempt such would be to travel perilously if not to hurl one's self upon disaster. Incompleteness has no value unless it is associated with the temper that explores the region of activity more persistently than it is ever explored by those to whom the goal is more important than the race.

Moreover, there would be far less chance of appreciating the larger gift if others, charmingly cabined and confined, were not at hand for contrast and background. So far as our memory serves there are none too many of these minor talents in evidence in the Bliss collection, but while the paintings already mentioned have been emphasized, not only because the artists belong to the comparatively small group showing in their art sensibility to the influence of the invisible world, but because of the exquisite sensibility to their quality as art shown by the character of the examples chosen by this collector; there is great variety among the rest.

Daumier is at his mildest in the richly modeled "Laundress," the figure of a woman, her bundle of laundry under her arm, holding a child by the hand as the two climb steps leading toward us from the river bank. Gauguin's "Portrait of a Young Tahitian" is handsome and natural, agreeably free from his aggressive symbolism. Picasso's "Woman in White" is a serene, contemplative figure, arousing no questions and no antagonisms. In "Hina Tefatou" we get the Gauguin of Tahiti and the exotic subject matter in which lay his great interest. Pissarro from whom Pissarro's early style is is represented. There are Renoir, supposed to have stemmed, also Degas, Derain, Monet, playing into the rhythm of modern art. There are Modigliani and Chirico. From the American group may be taken such vivid contrasts as Prendergast dreaming true of aristocratic form as it existed in the Greek past and adding to it a sensitiveness purely modern; Walt Kuhn intent upon the expression of concentrated character in contemporary types; Paul Dougherty of robust vision and technique.

There are many more. This notice, of course, far from being complete, and from lack of sufficient familiarity with the collection could not be that. It is merely an attempt to capture and fix an impression of extraordinary depth of a personal taste and intuition that with the passing of Miss Bliss has vanished from our world of art.

DAVIES AND LAUTREC
Two Paintings in the Collection of Miss Lizzie Bliss, Who Died March 12. Above: "Spring," by Arthur B. Davies. Right: "Miss May Belfort," by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

EXHIBITIONS NOW ON IN THE GALLERIES OF NEW YORK

By RUTH GREEN HARRIS.

THERE is a challenge in suggestion. The abstract paintings by Louis Marcoussis (at the Valentine Gallery) hints at the original object, and from this starting point the imagination builds an objective picture on the lines suggested by the artist. That there might be no confusion, this spectator ignored the titles.

Warm and mellow color and compact design keep all the work in much the same mood, something more luxurious than just comfort and less self-indulgent than luxury. There are tables overlapping playing cards and bread; there are staircases in arabesque against violoncellos; there are doors opening onto the beginnings of good breakfasts and luncheons. Cheating ourselves, we looked to see the title of No. II—"Soleil Couchant." Even here the sun is brought into the room.

As concretely as the Dutch artists, Louis Marcoussis is a painter of beautiful interiors.

* * *

One would judge Henry Strater's to be a candid vision taking in the physical nature of everything with [illegible] to have taken him to the Near East and to the part of Moorish Spain that is more Eastern than European.

* * *

Charles Schlein, at the Brownell-Lambertson Galleries, has been doing something with the form and color of his paint to make it an image of peasant labor. The forms are heavy and round and slow and a little dull. They are obvious enough in "Man at Work," in which the subject itself, regardless of form, would carry you to the conclusion about all this dumb toil. They are less obvious in "Children Dancing" and yet you know this earnest awkwardness speaks for a certain heritage on the part of the child, and for certain sympathies on the part of the artist. Only in "The Park," with its great triangular green, and in "Man and Woman," prim as a daguerreotype, does the artist step aside for a moment and divest himself of the garments of his tremendously intense theme, to make a humorous remark about it.

* * *

SOMETHING about the painting by Daniel Garber persuades you that he would give a faithful reproduction of the scene before him is, for this writer, the most attractive. There is part of the Colonial column, very gleaming white, round and substantial; there is a huge flower-pot, substantial also, and then there is a wicker chair, thin but sinewy and quite able to hold its own under any sort of strain.

* * *

At the Grand Central Galleries until March 28, Dorothy Ochtman is showing flower paintings and still-life. The artist did graduate work in the history of art and archaeology at Bryn Mawr, and this interest may show itself in a choice of subject, in the painting of metal and pottery and things that have already been designed beautifully by man. These she combines with flowers. A nice sense of color and tone makes each composition a harmonious whole.

* * *

CHARLES AND HARRY CARLSON, father and son, have been showing once more at the Morton Gallery. Père Carlson is doing more of the same charming thing, with its straightforward color (green is green and red is red). The drawing is child-like. Carlson Fils is becoming stronger, more assured, more [illegible]

adult has not humiliated himself by giving the child silly or ugly things—even though the child might prefer them (?). The textiles are particularly good. Two complete rooms, one for a girl of 8, the other for a boy of 12, are the most conspicuous exhibits.

This page did an enthusiastic paragraph about the Russian picture book when they were first seen about two years ago. They are ever[illegible]body's picture books. Good map, good pottery, good furniture, good silver, good posters, good reproductions are everybody's business. And it was quite thrilling to see reproduced a Metropolitan Museum picture that this writer adored as a child—the picture of a little boy.

* * *

The Woman's City Club, until the middle of April, is showing work by its artist members, some thirty in all. Pottery, painting, etching, drawing and water-color.

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Bliss Collection

In the five rooms and hallway that constitute the Museum of Modern Art in the Heckscher Building, Manhattan, last week hung the best collection of modern painting yet seen there—woodcuts and paintings by Gauguin, several vivid Cézannes, a Seurat seascape, a colorful Degas, splendid examples of Frenchmen Monet, Renoir, Redon, Daumier, Picasso, Matisse, Guys and of U. S. Artists Davies, Charles and Maurice Prendergast, Dougherty, Kuhn. More newsworthy than the exhibition's quality, however, was the fact that these paintings were now the Museum's property. Before the public was invited to look, a memorial service was held for the lady who had not loaned but given her collection. She died last March at 66, Miss Lizzie P. ("Lillie") Bliss, daughter of the late Cornelius Newton Bliss, President McKinley's Secretary of the Interior and rich president of Bliss, Fabyan & Co. (wholesale drygoods).

For her father, Lillie Bliss was hostess and housekeeper, until he died in 1911. She had learned kindness and sociability in this career, and in 1912 she stepped not only into wealth but popularity. Artists such as the late Arthur B. Davies, actors like Walter Hampden, Ruth Draper, Ethel Barrymore, and many a musician attended her formal, wineless *soirées*. By 1913 she was helping organize the historic exhibition in Manhattan's Squadron "A" Armory which introduced a continent to Modernism. One of the earliest collectors of modern paintings, in 1929 she was cofounder (with Mrs. John Davison Rockefeller and Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan) of the Museum of Modern Art, to which she bequeathed almost all that she had bought, pruned, guarded. A loan exhibition of her good friend and adviser Artist Davies hung beside her bequests last week. Critics agreed that the Bliss Collection has now made the Modern Museum what it was founded to become, a lively purgatory wherein promising new arrivals may await, as French artists wait in the Luxembourg for the Louvre, admission to the musty paradise of the Metropolitan Museum.

Time
May 25, 1931

NEW YORK TIMES
March 20th
1931

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Trustees for Stock.

In the testament, executed on Aug. 16, 1930, Miss Bliss said the art works disposed of were among the assets of the Paintings and Prints Corporation. She directed that if she owned all of the capital stock of the corporation at her death, the executors were to deliver the stock to her brother, Cornelius N. Bliss, chairman of the board of Bliss, Fabyan & Co., dry goods commission merchants, and president of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor; Robert G. McIntyre of the Macbeth Galleries and David Mackenzie of the law firm of Masten & Nichols, as trustees. The trustees were directed to hold the stock until they dissolved the corporation "in their discretion" and then to distribute the paintings as provided in the will.

The will provides that the bequests to the Museum of Modern Art shall be delivered within three years of Miss Bliss's death and that the executors and trustees shall be satisfied that the museum "is sufficiently endowed and is in the judgment of said trustees on a firm financial basis and in the hands of a competent board of trustees." Miss Bliss also specified that the Museum of Modern Art should not dispose of or sell the paintings bequeathed to it. If the museum does not qualify under these provisions, the will directs that the paintings go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The brother, Cornelius N. Bliss, gets the residuary estate of undetermined value, and $50,000 legacies go to the sister-in-law, the niece and two nephews.

The testatrix was a daughter of the late Cornelius N. Bliss, Secretary of the Interior in President McKinley's cabinet.

MISS BLISS AND THE MODERN MUSEUM.

A cultural community in area much more extensive than the geographical New York City has lost one of its outstanding figures by the death of Miss LIZZIE P. BLISS, daughter of the late CORNELIUS NEWTON BLISS, for more than a generation a leader in Republican national politics. To have been founder of the Kneisel Quartet of golden memory would be enough to assure Miss BLISS a place in the history of artistic aspiration and growth in the United States. Another beneficiary of her interest in music is the Juilliard Foundation. It is, however, in the field of painting that she put forth her chief energies, particularly during the later period of her life. As a close friend and patron of ARTHUR B. DAVIES she had her part in the historic Armory Exhibition of Modern Art in 1913 when this country was introduced to the startling new world of Cubism and Futurism. In 1921 she was a member of the committee which organized the exhibition of modern art at the Metropolitan Museum. A lifelong enthusiasm for the forward urge in the art world culminated in the founding of the Museum of Modern Art, of which the three creators were Miss BLISS, Mrs. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER Jr. and Mrs. CORNELIUS J. SULLIVAN.

In the Museum of Modern Art, which came into existence in November, 1929, Miss BLISS has her most conspicuous monument. The institution immediately took its place as a permanent feature in the esthetic life of the community. Miss BLISS'S death, last Friday, fell on the opening day of the eleventh exhibition staged by the Modern Museum in the course of its existence, the show of modern German painting and sculpture now under way. Beginning with a Cezanne-van Gogh-Gauguin exhibition, which was followed speedily by the sensationally successful show of painting in Paris, the Modern Museum has maintained its hold on a public whose interest in native work seems to be not very far behind its keenness about foreign masters. The recent Living Americans exhibition did quite as well as its immediate predecessor, the Corot and Daumier show. A total of a trifle less than a quarter of a million visitors in sixteen months furnishes a measure of the public response to the labors of Miss BLISS and her associates.

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Herald Tribune
March 20-1930

Miss L. P. Bliss Will Gives Noted Art to Museums

Modern Gallery Gets Bulk of Treasure House of Contemporary Master Works

$350,000 to Institutions

Daughter of McKinley's Secretary of Interior Aids Kin

The will of Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, daughter of the late Cornelius N. Bliss, Secretary of the Interior in the Cabinet of President McKinley, and Mrs. Elizabeth Plummer Bliss, was filed for probate in Surrogate's Court yesterday, disposing of an important collection of modern paintings, chiefly by Arthur B. Davies, one of the most highly regarded of American painters. Miss Bliss died March 12 at her home, 1001 Park Avenue.

Miss Bliss's collection is considered one of the most valuable and notable groups of modern paintings in this country. Although connoisseurs were reluctant to estimate yesterday the value of the collection, it was pointed out that some of the paintings alone are worth from $70,000 to $100,000 each. Others, however, are worth only $200 or so. Miss Bliss was recognized as owning some of Cezanne's finest works, together with other fine examples by Matisse, Picasso and other French moderns.

Modern Museum Gets Bulk

Miss Bliss left the bulk of her collection to the Museum of Modern Art, of 730 Fifth Avenue. The pictures designated in this bequest are twenty-one paintings by Cezanne, which include "Self Portrait," "Portrait of Madame Cezanne," "Portrait of M. Choquet," "Early Landscape," "The Battler," "Pine and Rocks" and "Big Still Life," which was bought by Miss Bliss in 1919 for $21,000; "Head of a Tahitian," "Hina Tefu Tu" and "Set A Woodcuts," by Gauguin; Picasso's "Green Still Life," "Woman in White" and eight of his lithographs.

The museum also receives three unnamed pictures by Derain, four by Matisse, including "Girl in Green," "On the Riviera" and two lithographs, a print by Daumier, portrait of Mme. Belfort N. Rose by Toulouse-Lautrec, two pastels, one oil and one lithograph by Odillon Redon, "After the Battle," "Race course," and drawings from old masters by Degas and a landscape by Renoir.

The will provides that "such distribution shall only be made at such time upon or prior to the death of the survivor of my nephew, Cornelius N. Bliss jr., and my niece, Elizabeth A. Bliss, or at such time upon or prior to the expiration of three years from my death." The trustees are instructed not to distribute the pictures until the museum has been proved solvent. All the paintings in the collection are the property of the Paintings and Prints Corporation, which was owned by Miss Bliss, and are to be held in trust by her brother, Cornelius N. Bliss, by Robert G. McIntyre, of the Macbeth Galleries, and Donald Mackenzie until the dissolution of the corporation.

Alfrted H. Barr jr., director of the Museum of Modern Art, of which Miss Bliss was vice-president, expressed his pleasure at the gift to the museum, but said its acceptance would be up to the board of trustees, which includes among others Mrs. John D. Rockefeller jr. Mr. Barr declared it would take at least three days' study of Miss Bliss's collection to set a monetary value on it.

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Metropolitan Gifts Made

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is bequeathed three Byzantine or early Italian paintings; "l'Etretat" by Monet, "Italian Hill Town" and "The Unicorns" by Davies, two of his watercolors and two wax and oil sketches by him to be selected by the museum.

The Brooklyn Museum of Art and Science receives six Davies paintings. They are "Freshness of the Wounded," "The Dawning," "Children Dancing," "Yielding Mists," "Homage to the Ocean" and "In the Sierras."

"Line of Mountains," and "Sleep" by Davies, are given to the National Gallery of British Art, in London; Phillips Academy, at Andover, Mass., gets "Spring Ecstacy" and four water colors by Davies and three water colors by Maurice Prendergast. Other bequests of Davies' pictures to museums are: Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, "Hill to Hill," "Frankincense," "Before Sunrise" and "The Great Mother"; San Francisco Art Association, "So As by Fire"; Portland Art Association, Portland, Ore., "Out of the Dew" and "Flocks of Spring"; St. Paul Art Institute, "Little Mattie," "Home" and "Hudson River"; Memorial Art Gallery of Rochester, "Winds of Corinth" and "Park at Evening"; Rhode Island School of Design, of Providence, "Clothed in Dominion"; Utica Public Library, Utica, N. Y., "Chanter's Mound" and "Mother and Child"; Cleveland Museum of Art, four drawings to be selected; the Newark Museum Association, "Indian Fantasy," "Wing on the Sea," "Foot Log on Jonathan Creek" and "Marmorearl Dream," and International House, 500 Riverside Drive, "Alchemy" and a large landscape.

Cornelius N. Bliss, brother, and his wife, Mrs. Zaidee C. Bliss, of Oyster Bay, L. I., receive four pictures by Prendergast and seventeen by Davies, $50,000 cash and the personal effects. Mr. Bliss also receives the residuary estate.

Elizabeth A. Bliss, a niece, of Oyster Bay, receives some water colors by Davies and Walt Kuhn, six other Davies works and $50,000 cash. Virginia H. Clark, of 4 East Sixty-sixth Street, receives two oil paintings and one water color by Davies. Any other paintings remaining in the collection after the special bequests have been made are to go to the Museum of Modern Art.

Miss Bliss also left $100,000 to the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, of 105 East Twenty-second Street, of which her brother is president; $50,000 to the Society of New York Hospital, of 8 West Sixteenth Street; $150,000 to the Cornelius N. Bliss Memorial Fund, Inc., of 117 Duane Street, and $50,000 to the Broadway Tabernacle Society, of 211 West Fifty-sixth Street. A nephew, Cornelius N. Bliss jr., of Oyster Bay, gets $50,000.

Miss Bliss directed that if the Museum of Modern Art should be unable to accept her donations the trustees of the museum turn the works over to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The will, which was filed by Millbank, Tweed, Hope & Webb, of 15 Broad Street, wat dated August 16, 1930, and names the United States Trust Company and Cornelius N. Bliss executors.

March 13th
Times

MISS LIZZIE P. BLISS, ART PATRON, IS DEAD

Daughter of Secretary of Interior in McKinley Cabinet—Was Supporter of Kneisel Quartet.

Miss Lizzie P. Bliss, patron of painting and music, died last night in her apartment at 1,001 Park Avenue, after an illness of two months, at the age of 66. She is survived by a brother, Cornelius N. Bliss of 4 East Sixty-sixth Street, chairman of the board of Bliss, Fabyan & Co., dry goods commission merchants; president of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor and director of many important corporations. Arrangements for the funeral had not been completed last night, but it is expected that the service will be held at the residence on Monday morning. Burial will take place privately.

Miss Bliss was born in Boston on April 11, 1864, a daughter of the late Cornelius N. Bliss, Secretary of the Interior in President McKinley's Cabinet, who was for many years treasurer of the Republican National Committee. She came to New York as a child and had lived here ever since. Like her brother she had always been interested in the city's charities.

As patron of the arts Miss Bliss is known especially for her support of the Kneisel Quartet, her service on the advisory committee of the Juilliard Foundation and as one of the organizers and vice president of the new Museum of Modern Art. She owned a valuable collection of American paintings. She belonged to the Cosmopolitan Club and the Automobile Club of America.

New York Times

March 20th, 1931

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Other pictures by Davies are divided among the San Francisco Art Association, Portland Art Association, Portland, Ore.; St. Paul Art Institute, St. Paul, Minn.; Memorial Art Gallery, Rochester, N. Y.; Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, R. I.; Utica Public Library, Utica, N. Y.; Children's Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio; Newark Museum Association, Newark, N. J., and the International House, 500 Riverside Drive.

Trustees for Stock.

In the testament, executed on Aug. 16, 1930, Miss Bliss said the art works disposed of were among the assets of the Paintings and Prints Corporation. She directed that if she owned all of the capital stock of the corporation at her death, the executors were to deliver the stock to her brother, Cornelius N. Bliss, chairman of the board of Bliss, Fabyan & Co., dry goods commission merchants, and president of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor; Robert G. McIntyre of the Macbeth Galleries and David Mackenzie of the law firm of Masten & Nichols, as trustees. The trustees were directed to hold the stock until they dissolved the corporation "in their discretion" and then to distribute the paintings as provided in the will.

The will provides that the bequests to the Museum of Modern Art shall be delivered within three years of Miss Bliss's death and that the executors and trustees shall be satisfied that the museum "is sufficiently endowed and is in the judgment of said trustees on a firm financial basis and in the hands of a competent board of trustees." Miss Bliss also specified that the Museum of Modern Art should not dispose of or sell the paintings bequeathed to it. If the museum does not qualify under these provisions, the will directs that the paintings go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The brother, Cornelius N. Bliss, gets the residuary estate of undetermined value, and $50,000 legacies go to the sister-in-law, the niece and two nephews.

The testatrix was a daughter of the late Cornelius N. Bliss, Secretary of the Interior in President McKinley's cabinet.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1949

Cornelius N. Bliss

Born in New York in 1874, Cornelius N. Bliss was a lifetime citizen of a growing town on which the impress of his active life was deep, admirable and enduring. In business, finance, politics and philanthropy he was a leader and an accomplisher, and as chairman of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association for thirteen years—1933-'46—he played a major part in bringing the association through times of too genuine and dangerous crisis. A hereditary boxholder, always an opera-lover, Mr. Bliss liked to remember the golden-throated singers in a Metropolitan past, and he kept a fine present appreciation of today's voices. For seven difficult years after 1929, he declared it was his job "to see that there was an opera for Mr. Johnson to run." He succeeded nobly, and the town's music lovers called him blessed.

In 1913, Mr. Bliss followed R. Fulton Cutting as president of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor. In this post, where he served for over twenty years, he saw the city pass through depression years which strained every resource of the association. Working indefatigably, he ably headed Mayor Walker's Emergency Work Relief Commission at a time when city breadlines reached to sad lengths of 1,500 men.

As he had seen his beloved opera association surmount its crisis years, so Mr. Bliss lived into a later era of a prosperity which was yet unable to do without the organized philanthropy in which he, as trustee and director on many boards, continued to take experienced and active part. He had come, he knew, into a time of what he called "the new humanity and a new economics." He fitted himself gracefully and well into these workings of governmental aids and securities, but in doing this he took with him his older humanity—that wise and kindly individual interest in his fellow men which kept him, to the end, a great citizen of no mean city.

NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 1949

Cornelius N. Bliss Funeral Held; Honors Paid by Opera Officials

A funeral service for Cornelius N. Bliss was held at 11 a. m. yesterday at St. James Protestant Episcopal Church, Madison Avenue and Seventy-first Street. Mr. Bliss, a retired financier and former chairman of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association, died Tuesday at Roosevelt Hospital. He was seventy-four.

The Rev. Dr. Arthur L. Kinsolving, rector of the church, conducted the service. Emery Darcy, Metropolitan Opera tenor, sang "In His House There Are Many Mansions." An intermezzo, composed by Miss Zaidie Parkinson, granddaughter of Mr. Bliss, was played by the organist, G. Darlington Richards.

Members of the Metropolitan Opera Association who attended were: George A. Sloan, chairman of the board; Charles M. Spofford, president; Morton Baum, Mrs. August Belmont, S. Sloan Colt, Mrs. William F. Gibbs, Joseph M. Hartfield, Mrs. Otto H. Kahn, Thomas H. McInnerney, David Sarnoff, Allen Wardwell and Mark Woods. The Metropolitan management was represented by Earle R. Lewis, assistant general manager, in the absence of Edward Johnson, who is on tour with the company.

Honorary ushers were A. Conger Goodyear, Barklie M. Henry, Mr. Sloan, Mr. Colt and Mr. Spofford.

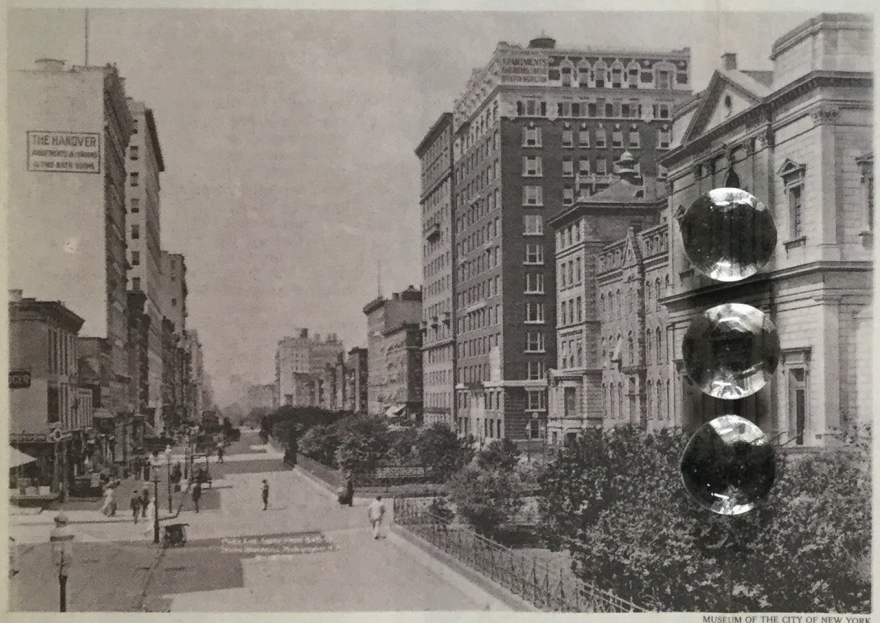
Officials of the Metropolitan Opera Guild present included Lauder Greenway, president; Mrs. John T. Lawrence, Mrs. John Paine and Mrs. John DeWitt Peltz.

Others present ere: Nelson Rockefeller, Myron C. Taylor, Giuseppe Caruso, William M. Chadbourne, Milton Cross, Sol Jurok, Philip Kearny, Mrs. Virgilio Lazzari, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Tibbett, and many artists and former members of the company.

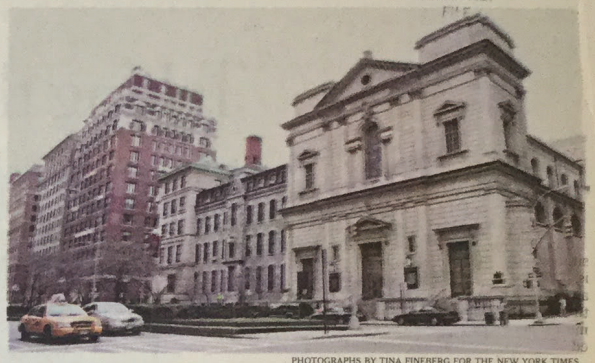
Members of the family present were Mrs. Zaidee Cobb Bliss, wife of Mr. Bliss; Mrs. Elizabeth Parkinson, his daughter; two sons, Cornelius N. Bliss jr. and Anthony A. Bliss, and their wives, and four grandchildren, Miss Zaidee Parkinson and John Parkinson 3d; Cornelius N. Bliss 3d and David Bliss.

STREETSCAPES/Park Avenue Between 83rd and 84th Street

Seven Apartment Houses In a Piazza-Like Setting



MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK



PHOTOGRAPHS BY TINA FINEBERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

WORTHY OF ROME
At left, looking south from 84th Street about 1912, 970 Park Avenue is just past the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola; above, the same perspective today. Below, looking north at the east side of Park Avenue at 83rd Street, the first four apartment buildings are, right to left, Nos. 983, 985, 993 and 1001.

By CHRISTOPHER GRAY

IN the development of upper Park Avenue, the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola looms large. Originally named the Church of St. Lawrence O'Toole, it began building on its blockfront between 83rd and 84th Streets in the 1880s, and its massive Baroque-style main sanctuary was dedicated in 1898.

By then, this section of Park Avenue was filling up with five- and six-story apartment houses about as high as the church complex. But after 1910, Park was redeveloped with 12- and even 15-story apartment houses, and these create a C shape surrounding the lower ecclesiastical complex.

The earliest of these, 970 Park, went up in 1912 at the southwest corner of 83rd Street. Originally 13 stories high, it was designed by Schwartz & Gross for Bing & Bing, the developer. Its solid red brick facade and simple Classical-style detailing give it a roomy, unpretentious air.

At the southeast corner of 84th, the Bings — the brothers Leo and Alexander — had Robert T. Lyons design 993 Park Avenue, completed in 1915. Mr. Lyons gave his clients an imposing apartment house with a sumptuous green cornice and wide spaces between the windows, which give it a sense of repose so often lacking in other buildings.

It seems the Bings liked this stretch of the avenue, because in 1916 they built 1000 Park, at the northwest corner of 84th, this time designed by Emery Roth. This is the building memorable for the squirrels worked into the terra cotta.

In 1926, the Tishman family put up 983 Park, at the northeast corner of 83rd, designed by Schwartz & Gross. Across 83rd Street, J. M. Felson designed the 1929 apartment house at 975 Park for Edgar Ellinger, a developer. He gave it several unusual touches. These include diaper work (criss-cross brick designs) at the parapet wall and swags at the third floor running between bucrania (skulls of oxen — livestock is not often seen on Park Avenue).

The most unusual building of this little group was finished in 1929: 1001 Park Avenue, at 84th Street. Pennington & Lewis, its architect, used decoration with aristocratic severity, just a pineapple over the doorway and a Chippendale-style iron fence at the roof. The apartment house was a purpose-built co-op, put up by a consortium headed by Theodore E. Rhoades, who was associated with other high-end projects.

A shareholder at 1001 Park was Lillie P. Bliss, the art collector who was one of the founding officers of the Museum of Modern Art in 1929. Miss Bliss had a triplex — the 13th, 14th and penthouse levels — and lived there with five maids and a collection of works by Cézanne, Derain, Gaugain, Seurat and Picasso.

She had a large exhibition gallery, and one of the most unusual rooms on Park Avenue. On the top level, there was a huge closet, labeled "picture storage" on the original drawings. The spare, nearly Surrealist forms of the roof-tank enclosure and related structures look as if they could be from a de Chirico landscape.

Last year, the very narrow 985 Park Avenue, its exterior designed by Costas Kondylis, rose on the site of a little 1870 house torn down about two years ago.

At 970 Park Avenue, time is gradually softening the shock of a blocky penthouse added in the 1990s. At 993 Park, the magnificent cornice always looks bright green, as if just came back from the cleaners.

Emery Roth's 1000 Park — the building with the intricate terra-cotta squirrels — once had wooden windows with nine-over-one panes, but most have been replaced by single panes..

Pennington & Lewis's 1001 Park was cleaned within the last year or so, with startling results. What was once a field of dishwater-gray brick is now soft and honey-colored, like peach marmalade.

Most people miss that the windows seem to vary from small to large from low to high. They indicate that ne plus ultra of apartment house living, when the layouts vary from floor to floor. In this case most of the apartments were simplexes, with higher ceilings in the entertaining areas. The architects flip-flopped these from floor to floor; where necessary, there were a few steps down or up between each section.

There are no tables or chairs and traffic zooms past, but you could do worse than spend an afternoon in the sun on this block of Park Avenue, sort of a New York version of a piazza in Rome. Even if you can't get a gelato or espresso.

E-mail: streetscapes@nytimes.com

Cornelius N. Bliss Dies at 74; Financier, Ex-Opera Chairman

Red Cross Incorporator Directed New York Relief Work in Walker Regime

Cornelius N. Bliss, seventy-four, retired financier, who was an incorporator of the American Red Cross and was chairman of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Opera Association from 1933 to 1946, died yesterday afternoon at Roosevelt Hospital after a short illness. He lived at 4 East Sixty-sixth Street.

Mr. Bliss resigned as Metropolitan Opera Association chairman in February, 1946, and was succeeded by George A. Sloan. On him had fallen the task of guiding the association through the lean years of depression in the 1930s, when the future of institutions like the Metropolitan seemed precarious at best.

Mr. Bliss, who previously had served seven years on the board of the former Metropolitan Opera and Real Estate Company, was a member of the executive committee and of the opera's production committee as well as chairman of the association.

One of the innovations of his chairmanship was the issuance of a detailed financial statement. For the first time in fifty-nine years the association made public such a statement on Aug. 2, 1942, in its campaign to extend public interest in the opera and the business organization behind it.

Born in New York City April 13, 1874, Mr. Bliss was the son of the late Cornelius N. and Elizabeth Plumer Bliss. His father had served as Secretary of the Interior in the Cabinet of President William McKinley.

Mr. Bliss attended the Cutler School and was graduated from Harvard University in 1897. He began his business career in the dry goods commission business of his father, Bliss, Fabyan & Co., Inc. He became a partner in 1899 and was chairman of the board until 1932, when he resigned.

Mr. Bliss was treasurer of the 1916 Republican national campaign. In World War I the late President Woodrow Wilson appointed him a member of the War Council of the American Red Cross. He was a member of the advisory committee of the Red Cross in World War II and served for a time as its acting director.

In 1930 the late James J. Walker, then Mayor, appointed Mr. Bliss head of New York City's Emergency Work Relief Committee. From 1910 to 1939 he was a member of the board of trustees of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor and when the Community Service Society was organized in 1939 Mr. Bliss was made vice-president and appointed to its board of trustees.

Ira Rosenberg

Cornelius N. Bliss

Mr. Bliss was a director of the Milbank Memorial Fund and had been a director of the New York Hospital and Greater New York Fund, as well as a trustee of the Army Relief Society and the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis. He was a member of the national sponsoring committee of the United Service Organizations.

Mr. Bliss also was a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and was a director of the Bankers Trust Company and the New York Life Insurance Company.

His clubs included the National Republican, Union League, University, Links, Golf, India House and Century Association of New York; the Metropolitan, of Washington, and the Harvard Clubs of New York and Boston.

On April 26, 1906, Mr. Bliss married the former Miss Zaidee C. Cobb, of Washington, who survives. Also surviving are a daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Parkinson, of New York, and two sons, Cornelius N. Bliss jr., and Anthony A. Bliss, also of New York.