

# Exhibit covers vital period of American art

American art and American taste changed radically during a vital period that began with the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition (1876) and peaked at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893).

"The Quest for Unity: American Art Between World's Fairs 1876-1893" is the first major exhibition to explore this transition from the Victorian era to the modern era. The exhibition was organized by The Detroit Institute of Arts and will be seen exclusively at the museum from Wednesday, Aug. 24

through Sunday, Oct. 30.

Nearly 300 works in "The Quest for Unity" show American art changing in character from Romantic, provincial and nationalistic to cosmopolitan and international. The exhibition traces the impact of the Philadelphia Centennial on young artists, their consequent search for a new spirit of aesthetic and emotional unity, and the culmination of their quest evident in the Columbian Exposition, which celebrated America's cultural maturity.

Most of the works in the exhibition

actually were displayed at one of the other world's fairs. Paintings, sculptures, furniture, silver, glass, ceramics, stained glass and textiles lent by 98 public and private collections represent some of the finest late 19th century American art.

Among more than 85 paintings are "Harmony in Grey and Green: Miss Cicely Alexander" by James McNeill Whistler; "The Child's Carriage" by Thomas Eakins; "The Gate" by Winslow Homer, several portraits by John Singer

Sargent including "The Falleron Children," "On the Yacht," "Nanooon," "Venus, 1890" by Julius Stewart; "Springtime" by John Twachtman; and "The Soul in Bondage" by Elihu Vedder.

John Rogers, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Daniel Chester French, Alexander Milne Calder and Paul Warland Bartlett are a few of the sculptors represented.

The 1893 Exposition presented a cosmopolitan panorama of American painting, sculpture and decorative arts. The influences of Japan, Greece, France, England and exotic places worldwide had been assimilated by the new American artistic sensibility. In most dramatic fashion, this World's Fair celebrated the culmination of the American quest for unified principles of design and standards of taste.

The National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C. "Detroit and the World's Fairs," a free exhibition introducing "The Quest for Unity" will be located next to the main exhibition entrance on the second level, Ford Wing (organized by the department of education).

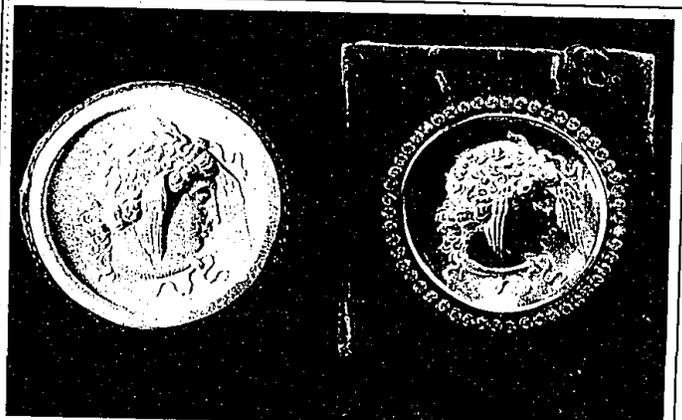
"The Quest for Unity" will be open to the public during regular museum hours 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday - Sunday (closed Mondays, holidays).

General admission is \$2.50; senior citizens and students with ID, \$1.50. Founders Society members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult are free.

Exhibition catalog of 320 pp., 20 color plates, black and white illustrations of all objects is available with essays and entries by curators and members of the scientific committee after Aug. 24. Exhibition poster, gallery guide, and related materials are also at Museum Shop.

Masterwork Talks on the exhibit will be given at 1:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays, Sept. 7, 9, selected paintings; Kathleen Pyne, Sept. 14, 16, selected decorative arts, Sarah Hufford, Sept. 28, 30, selected paintings, James Bridestine; and Oct. 12, 14, selected works, Patience Young.

A symposium on the exhibition and issues of the era will be held Friday evening, Oct. 7 and Saturday, Oct. 8. For information telephone Diana Pagotto at (313) 833-9804. The symposium is assisted by a grant from the Michigan Council for the Humanities.



When completed, the head of Medusa in 18-Kt. still in wax, waiting to be soldered. At left is gold will be encircled with diamonds. As shown James Tassio's original mold. Here, the diamonds, set by David Wachler, are

## Old Molds given new life

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ered in place last week.

In the new store on the southwest corner of Maple and Woodward, the workshop with up to 10 apprentices and craftsmen is open to view by people who come into the store.

This and the open showroom are a different concept from the arrangement at the Wachlers' former establishment in Southfield where only a few choice pieces were on display. Link Wachler said, "This is the shop where we do designing and jewelry."

He said that by the time he was 12

he was working around the repair and design area, as did his three younger brothers and cousins.

HIS BROTHER, Gary, runs the store in the Renaissance Center. Another brother, Glen, a student at Michigan State, works summers and weekends, and brother Drew, who grew up working in the family business, is an attorney. A second cousin, Ron Wachler, is also in the business.

"Everybody in the family business finds a niche," Link Wachler said, explaining that his is essentially the physical designing.

"Buzz," he said, "does a lot of the designs, I work them out."

But, there is amiable comment and conversation among the family members, so that each may contribute something to a particular piece, in either word or deed.

And while they may do gold cuff links of the Renaissance Towers or the head of a new born infant in 14 karat gold, the work with Tassio's molds is exciting and a source of great satisfaction.

It creates a kind of aesthetic continuity which the three generations of Wachlers understand and appreciate.

DECORATIVE ARTS displayed include early Rockwood Pottery, stained glass and mosaics by Louis Comfort Tiffany, silver by Gorham, Reed and Barton, and Tiffany and Company, leaded glass by John La Farge, ornamental wrought iron by Louis Sullivan, furniture by E. H. Richardson, Richard Morris Hunt and Herter Brothers.

"As a whole, the exhibition captures the spirit of an age long overlooked or taken for granted," said Dr. Frederick J. Cummings, director of the Detroit Institute of Arts. "Quest for Unity" reveals the richness, diversity and strength of a period which is being reassessed by scholars and rediscovered by collectors."

The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial gave citizens of the United States their first great collective view of American art in industry and arts. It was the last large public exhibition of Hudson River School and Luminist painters. Also shown were works by the young Homer, Eakins and William Merritt Chase, who would dominate the 1893 Chicago Fair.

Organizing curator of "The Quest for Unity" is Kathleen Pyne, research associate, department of American art, the Detroit Institute of Arts.

The scientific committee also includes Dr. Michele Bogart, assistant professor, State University of New York at Stony Brook; David A. Hanks, consultant to the Smithsonian Institution; David C. Huntington, professor, department of history of art, The University of Michigan; Nancy Rivard Shaw, curator of American art, the Detroit Institute of Arts; Deborah Fenton Shepherd, exhibitions coordinator, International Exhibitions Foundation, Washington, D.C.

The exhibition was made possible by the Founders Society, Detroit Institute of Arts and supported by a grant from

More importantly, the Centennial's international displays exposed thousands of visitors to Japanese aesthetics and to contemporary European art movements. This resulted in new interest in the culture and art of other countries and stimulated American travel and study abroad; for aspiring American artists in particular, training in the studios and ateliers of Europe became essential.

THE SCOPE of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition was much more ambitious and sophisticated than the Centennial. To house displays of arts, science and technology, Chicago built a

## Home sales still going up

Home sales in the area served by the Birmingham-Bloomfield Board of Realtors continued an upward climb in July with 170 residential sales reported in July, compared to 104 during July a year ago.

The July sales push the 1983 total to 1,091 compared to 860 for that period last year.

## Antique show

The Oakland Humane Society will hold its fifth annual antique show and sale Friday, Saturday and Sunday at Birmingham Masonic Temple, 357 N. Woodward, Bloomfield Hills. Hours are 10 a. m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 10 a. m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$2.

All proceeds are used by the non-profit Humane Society to help defray the cost of feeding and housing the more than 400 animals currently in residence at their shelter. The Society which operates solely on public donations, memberships and fund raising events doesn't destroy animals, but tries to place them into good homes.

For antique show information, call 692-7822.

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By: *Harmon Frankel*

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